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**NNNN**

\*WPD301 09/20/2006

Operation Medusa Foiled Taliban Plans, NATO Commander Says  
(Offensive reduced Taliban strength by at least one-fourth, says General Jones) (770)

Washington -- NATO's supreme commander says the alliance's recently concluded offensive operation in southern Afghanistan killed at least a quarter of the former Taliban regime's fighters, and possibly more.

Meeting with journalists at the Pentagon September 20, Marine General James Jones was asked for an overall estimate of the number of Taliban fighters killed in Operation Medusa, wherein 6,000 NATO troops from five countries, along with Afghan army forces, established a presence for the first time in Khandahar province. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060918160151idybeekcm0.9616358> ).)

Jones said the number of those killed was around 1,000, "but ... if you said 1,500 it wouldn't surprise me."

The alliance estimates Taliban fighting strength at 3,000 to 4,000 militants, Jones said, plus Afghans that the Taliban pays or coerces to assist it in specific military operations.

Using the higher number for Taliban strength and the lowest number for their losses in fighting NATO, it can be presumed that the Taliban lost at least one-quarter of its fighters in the past few weeks. Using other figures would make the percentage lost even higher, Jones said.

"[W]hat we don't have clear figures on, " he added, "is [the Taliban's] ability to regenerate themselves ... and that is a serious problem."

The general also said that the Taliban is "not the only problem" confronting forces in Afghanistan.

Al-Qaida remnants, opium traffickers and other criminal gangs, corruption and tribal conflicts also contribute to the complex security challenges faced by the alliance as it helps to stabilize Afghanistan, the general said.

Afghanistan remains a leading producer of illegal drugs, which Jones said were "at the core of everything that can go wrong in Afghanistan." The drug trade affects governmental corruption, crime, the creation of a market economy, and also the insurgency, he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060901153625mlenuhret0.9886438> ).)

"[T]here's increasing evidence that a lot of the funding goes from the narcotics traffickers to the criminal elements, to what's left of al-Qaida, to the Taliban and anyone else that wants to create mischief," said Jones. He called it "a pervasive and growing problem ... which has only gotten worse."

Jones said that in the matter of eliminating the opium/heroin industry from Afghanistan, "we're not making progress. We're losing ground. And that has to be reversed."

What is needed, said Jones, is more focus, more organization, more planning and the establishment of a set of priorities to help the government reach out to all its citizens.

"Trying to do everything all at once and doing nothing really well is not a strategy," Jones said. "It is simply just a way to spend money and to hope that you're doing the right thing."

#### NATO FOREIGN MINISTERS TO MEET SEPTEMBER 21

The foreign ministers of NATO's 26 member countries are scheduled to meet September 21 on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly meeting, and senior U.S. officials said that Afghanistan would figure prominently in their discussions. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060918151615MVyelwarC0.4810602> ).)

The officials, speaking on background September 20 in New York, said that the successful conclusion of Operation Medusa sent a clear message to the people of Afghanistan that the Taliban's reign of terror will not return.

Taliban remnants, they said, re-infiltrated southern Afghanistan this summer and attempted to convince Afghans that the country's "experiment with democracy" was a mistake. They also tried to buy support by hiring local fighters and spreading money around in an area of the country that faces profound economic hardship.

But the militants fatally miscalculated the alliance's resolve in moving south -- into the Taliban's former stronghold -- to take over security responsibility from U.S.-led coalition forces. In the recently completed Operation Medusa, the alliance "wiped the floor with the Taliban," one official remarked.

NATO is continuing the momentum by conducting follow-up operations, as well as engaging local authorities and supporting efforts to deliver humanitarian aid, facilitate rebuilding and "bring help and hope" to the people.

Afghans are scared and want to see who is stronger, the officials said, but NATO and Afghanistan's armed forces must convince them that the Taliban, "yesterday's men," will not win, the officials said.

To fulfill both missions, the officials said, NATO's International Security Assistance Force needs more troops. They reported that Poland and Romania intend to send soldiers and that Canada and the United Kingdom are planning to augment their forces already on the ground.

For more information, see Rebuilding Afghanistan ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/rebuilding\\_afghanistan.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/sa/rebuilding_afghanistan.html) ).

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\*WPD302 09/20/2006

Bush Meets with Palestinian President, Other Leaders in New York  
(Middle East issues dominate sideline talks at U.N. General Assembly) (670)

Washington – On the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, President Bush told Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, "[T]he best way to bring peace to the Holy Land is for two democratic states living side by side in peace." He also said that "the Palestinian state must have territorial integrity" and expressed the wish for the Palestinians to have "a society in which they can raise their children in peace and hope."

Abbas thanked the president for U.S. support of the peace process and told Bush, "[Y]ou are the first American president to adopt the vision of two states living side by side." Abbas said a majority of Palestinians shared this vision. "Palestinian people desire peace and there is no power on earth that can prevent the Palestinian people from moving toward the peaceful solution," he said. Bush and Abbas spoke to reporters at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York September 20.

At a private meeting earlier, the two leaders spoke about efforts to resolve the "very difficult Palestinian political situation," according to Deputy National Security Advisor Elliott Abrams, who briefed the press after their conversation. He said Bush commended Abbas on his efforts and expressed hope he would succeed in producing a Palestinian government with which the international community could work.

The Quartet for Middle East peace, which includes the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States, has said the Palestinian Authority must recognize Israel, abandon violence and terrorism and agree to respect previously signed agreements with Israel in order to win legitimacy with the international community.

Abbas reiterated his strong commitment to building a viable Palestinian state. Discussions about forming a new national unity government in the Palestinian Authority were put on hold when Abbas left for the General Assembly.

Abrams said Bush wants Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to meet and re-engage, "obviously after the freeing of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit," with the "ultimate goal of achieving a democratic and peaceful Palestinian state." He said the two presidents discussed possible strategies to accomplish this.

Abrams also clarified that the United States, while suspending aid to the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority, is giving humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people through nongovernmental organizations and to agencies that are "not under the control of Hamas, of the prime minister, of the Cabinet, but rather are under the control of President Abbas."

While in New York, Bush met with several other world leaders, and Middle East developments dominated much of the discussion. On September 19, he met separately with French President Jacques Chirac and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Speaking about the Iranian nuclear issue, Bush and Chirac agreed on "the desire to go with a diplomatic approach," according to National Security Council (NSC) official Judy Ansley, who later briefed reporters. According to NSC official Mike Kozak, Bush and Annan agreed on the need for "the international community to stay consistent and united on the topics, so that there was clarity as to the way forward and the way to a solution."

Also on September 19, Bush met Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, the newly elected first Muslim woman president of the General Assembly. "They talked about women as an agent of change in the Middle East, and the need to treat women with equality and respect," Kozak told reporters. President Bush also attended a round table on democracy.

During an hourlong meeting with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, Bush expressed his continuing support for a strong government in Iraq. He expressed "confidence that Iraq will succeed, but also ... commitment on all sides to work together to help Iraq make some very tough choices," said Deputy National Security Advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan Meghan O'Sullivan.

A transcript ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060920-2.html> ) of Abrams' briefing is available on the White House Web site.

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\*WPD303 09/20/2006

Iraqi, Coalition Forces Prepare for Expected Ramadan Violence  
(Insurgents, terrorists step up attacks during holy month, says U.S. general) (820)

By David McKeeby  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Iraqi army and national police units, supported by their coalition allies, have conducted more than 600 security operations in the past two weeks as part of an effort to disrupt plans by enemies of the new Iraq to launch attacks against civilians during the upcoming observance of the Muslim holy month Ramadan.

"Historically, Ramadan has been a period of increased violence," Multinational Forces – Iraq spokesman Army Major General William Caldwell told reporters in a September 20 press briefing in Baghdad, Iraq. "Iraqi security forces, with coalition forces in support, have plans to address this concern."

Currently, he reported, Iraqi and coalition forces are engaged in 10 separate operations to root out the three leading threats to Iraqi democracy: insurgents, foreign terrorist cells and groups perpetrating sectarian violence in the country's northern and western provinces, as well as in the capital.

Other units, he added, are engaged in humanitarian aid and civil affairs projects to help local Iraqi citizens rebuild and improve their communities. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060907144838eaifas0.3919031> ).)

Caldwell said that the number of attacks linked to al-Qaida in Iraq have increased, especially in Baghdad, but also in al-Anbar, Salah ad-Din, and Diyala provinces. Because Iraqi civilians are the terrorists' preferred victims, finding and neutralizing these foreign fighters remains a top priority, said Caldwell.

Since January, he reported, Iraqi and coalition forces have detained more than 630 terrorists from more than 25 countries. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060816155113idybeekcm0.6714746> ).)

"Operation Together Forward," the Iraqi-led effort to secure Baghdad's most violent neighborhoods continues, Caldwell said. To date, forces have searched more than 70,000 buildings in the communities of Doura, Ameriyah, Ghazaliyah, East Mansour, Adhamiyah, Risalah, Khadra, Shaab and Jihad.

Iraqi and coalition units have detained approximately 100 individuals with suspected links to illegal activities, seized more than 1,400 weapons; and worked with local leaders to identify and fund trash removal and other public works projects. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060914180918idybeekcm8.610171e-02> ).)

But outside the neighborhoods where "Operation Together Forward" is active, Caldwell said, sectarian violence continues, as seen in an increase of killings across the Iraqi capital. Caldwell said that although public perceptions of security are improving, many Iraqi citizens still do not feel safe traveling outside their neighborhoods. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060818154353idybeekcm0.7698023> ).)

"Iraqi security forces and coalition forces will remain vigilant and adjust our tactics as necessary," Caldwell said, highlighting a recent successful operation in Baghdad that captured 32 members of a sectarian "death squad," including its leader.

Beyond ongoing security challenges, Caldwell reported that the Iraqi government continues to make progress. On September 20, local authorities will assume provisional responsibility for security in the southern province of Dhi Qar, joining its neighbor, Muthana, in being under full Iraqi control. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060713150348MLenuhreT0.6914179> ).)

In Iraq's restive al-Anbar province, Caldwell reported that Sunni tribal leaders recently met to discuss cooperation with the Iraqi government to stop the insurgents and terrorist groups that have made the level of violence in their region second only to that in Baghdad. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060915142402sjhtrop0.2953607> ).)

These and other positive developments, he said, show that "Iraqi leaders are making strides and are just addressing the challenges facing this nation. ... Coalition forces will continue to support them during this difficult transition." (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060914143952idybeekcm0.9316522> ).)

#### IRAQ TAKES COMMAND OF ANOTHER ARMY DIVISION

In another indication of Iraq's increasing self-sufficiency, its ground forces command took full operational control of the second of its 10 army divisions during the week of September 17. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060911171804idybeekcm6.852359e-02> ).)

In a September 18 press briefing for Iraqi media in Baghdad, Caldwell congratulated Iraqi officials for assuming control of their 4th Division, which has been responsible for maintaining security in northern Iraq's Salah ad-Din province since August 8. (See related article (

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=20060808161816idybeekcm0.9162561> ).)

In a September 7 ceremony in the Iraqi capital, coalition commander Army General William Casey and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki signed an agreement initiating the full transition of Iraq's military from joint command under Multinational Corps – Iraq to a total Iraqi chain of command. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060907143317idybeekcm0.2682917> ).)

"Every day we see the Iraqi security forces taking the lead to defeat the insurgency, to quell ethno-sectarian violence, and to ensure a safe and stable and secure life for the Iraqi people," Caldwell said. "They have made tremendous strides in the equipment, the combat readiness, the leadership and confidence within the Iraqi security forces."

The general added that as Iraqi security forces take on more responsibility for security in their country, coalition forces increasingly will move into supporting roles, providing training and other support as necessary.

Transcripts of Caldwell's September 20 ( [http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5795&Itemid=30](http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5795&Itemid=30) ) and September 18 ( [http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5759&Itemid=30](http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5759&Itemid=30) ) briefings are available from the Multi-National Force – Iraq Web site.

For more information, see Iraq Update ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/iraq.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/iraq.html) ).

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\*WPD304 09/20/2006

Multilateral Approach Key to Prosperity, IMF's Krueger Says  
(Strengthening of multilateralism in trade, capital flows needed, she adds) (440)

Washington -- The international community has prospered during recent years largely because many countries have adopted a multilateral approach to developing economic policies that make them less vulnerable to financial crises, says an International Monetary Fund (IMF) official.

Multilateralism in trade and capital flows has allowed countries to enhance efficiency and increase their abilities to compete in ways that are "further growth-enhancing," said Anne Krueger, the fund's first deputy managing director.

But, she said, countries must appreciate "the continuing importance of the multilateral systems, and to strengthen them."

Krueger spoke September 19 at the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Singapore.

She said three factors regarding countries' development of their economic policies continue to raise concern.

One is that many countries increasingly are relying on preferential trading arrangements with one another, which she said is "discriminatory." If preferential treatment becomes more prevalent, protections of multilateral regimes for capital flows, especially to developing countries, would become more difficult to develop, she said.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson agrees. In remarks September 13 in Washington Paulson said, "A competitive, well-regulated financial system and the free flow of capital will help reduce the extraordinarily high levels of precautionary savings and allocate capital to its most efficient use, which will help raise productivity and living standards. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2006/Sep/13-190448.html> ).)

Another concern Krueger cited is that private capital flows, while increasing, are not multilaterally coherent. Krueger stressed the importance of adopting "internationally recognized rules" for the treatment of foreign assets and capital flows "that provide for uniform treatment regardless of country of origin and otherwise ensure a level playing field" for all countries.

The United States supports key financial standards and codes developed by international standard setting bodies including the IMF, World Bank, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.

A third concern is that in developing their own economic systems, some countries are not considering how their targeted outcomes, such as short-term growth, might affect the strength of the multilateral institutions that can help them, such as the IMF.

Krueger said the multilateral trading system would "inevitably be weakened should the Doha round [of trade talks] end without agreement on all countries to reduce subsidies and other trade barriers. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060724145101ebyeessedo3.396243e-02> ).)

The potential failure of the Doha round "should be greeted with alarm by all who have shared in the rising living standards" of the past six decades, she said.

The full text ( <http://www.imf.org/external/np/speeches/2006/091906a.htm> ) of Krueger's prepared remarks is available on the IMF web site.

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\*WPD305 09/20/2006

United States, China Seek To Foster Reliable, Affordable Energy  
(Energy dialogue group reviews energy security, strategic petroleum reserves) (660)

By Jane Morse  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The Energy Policy Dialogue between the United States and China -- the two largest energy-consumers in the world -- is critical for developing mutual understanding of each country's policies, programs and priorities, an official from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) says.

Speaking at a September 19 briefing at the Foreign Press Center in Washington, Karen Harbert, the assistant secretary of energy for policy and international affairs, said that the Energy Policy Dialogue provides a forum within which representatives of both nations can meet annually to discuss how each is implementing its energy policies.

Harbert, who led the U.S. delegation to the talks in Beijing this year, said both countries "feel very strongly about sustaining the world's economic growth while ensuring that we have access to reliable, affordable energy, and doing it in an environmentally sustainable way." (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060914144451ajesrom0.2473261> ).)



The U.S.-China Energy Policy Dialogue between DOE and China's National Development and Reform Commission was created in 2004 as a forum to discuss areas for energy cooperation between the two countries. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Jul/01-4937.html> ).)

## STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVES, ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The 2006 discussions focused on how each side defines energy security and the value of strategic petroleum reserves, according to Harbert.

"We impressed upon the Chinese," she said, "that we feel it's very important that in establishing their own strategic petroleum reserve, that they use it in a manner that is consistent with international principles, which means that they use it for mitigating severe supply disruptions and not for ... high-price mitigation."

Harbert said the United States is very much interested in China becoming a more efficient energy consumer, if only to expand the supply of energy worldwide. To achieve its energy efficiency targets, she said, China must diversify the types of energy it uses and expand the use of renewable energy.

China's fast-growing industrial sector is increasing its demands on energy supplies, Harbert said. The United States has implemented "a very successful program" that analyzes certain industries and suggests ways that they can actually improve their energy efficiency, and has offered to make available U.S. experts to the Chinese government so that Beijing could fashion a similar program.

## ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

The United States, she said, supports commercializing some clean-coal technology and putting it into use in China. The United States also has offered to bring China more officially into its FutureGen project, which is an initiative to build the first emissions-free coal-fired power plant in the United States. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=December&x=20051207154404lcniirellep0.9694635&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html> ).)

According to Harbert, Chinese industry has joined the project. It is being underwritten 80 percent by the U.S. government and 20 percent by industry and other governments that choose to take part in this effort, she said.

Harbert also emphasized that the United States is following "very strict policies" intent on enforcing the type of regulations that will prevent the proliferation of fissile material that could be used for the production of weapons of mass production or terrorist-related activities. (See Arms Control and Non-Proliferation ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/arms\\_control.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html) ).)

Nonetheless, the Bush administration wants to see the expansion of civilian use of nuclear power using advanced, proliferation-resistant technologies, she said.

The United States is willing to cooperate with China on developing proliferation-resistant technology to help the country realize its nuclear energy expansion goals, the energy official said. In this regard, according to Harbert, "we actually have policies that are very complementary to each other."

Harbert said a group of 10 countries is working on advanced technologies for proliferation-resistant nuclear power. All agree that China be invited to join in this research, she said.

A transcript ( <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/72880.htm> ) of the briefing is available on the State Department Web site.

For more on U.S. policy, see The United States and China ( <http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp105.htm> ), Environment (

[http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/environment.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/environment.html) ) and Science and Technology ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/scitech.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/scitech.html) ).

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\*WPD306 09/20/2006

United States Urges Prompt Restoration of Democracy in Thailand  
(Coups has implications for U.S. assistance to country, officials say) (530)

By Peggy B. Hu  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is urging the prompt restoration of democracy in Thailand, administration officials said September 20.

On September 19, a group calling itself the Committee for Democratic Reform under the Monarchy as Head of State seized control of the government institutions in Bangkok and declared martial law. A spokesman for the group pledged to name a civilian caretaker prime minister within two weeks and promised elections by October 2007, after the drafting of a new constitution. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was in New York attending the start of the United Nations' 61st General Assembly session at the time of the coup.

"We're disappointed in the coup," White House spokesman Tony Snow said at a White House press briefing September 20. "We hope those who mounted it will make good, and make good swiftly, on their promises to restore democracy. And by restoring democracy not only means elected governments, but protected rights of citizens, including freedom of speech and assembly."

Snow added that once Thailand restores democracy the United States will "be in a position to move forward on a free trade agreement with them."

"There is no justification for a military coup in Thailand or in any place else. And we certainly are extremely disappointed by this action," State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey said at the regular department briefing the same day. "It is a step backward for democracy in Thailand. And I think it is important that that step backward now be resolved in accordance with the rule of law and democracy."

"We very much urge that democratic elections be held as soon as possible, which is a commitment military officials have made. That commitment needs to be met and it needs to be respected. And in that process, we need to make sure that there is full respect for freedom of speech and assembly and that violence be avoided," he continued.

Casey added that there are "consequences when these kinds of actions take place." In light of the situation in Thailand, he said, the United States would be reviewing certain "aspects" of its relationship with the country, including the provision of financial assistance.

Under Section 508 of the Foreign Operations Act for Fiscal Year 2006, the United States may not use appropriated funds to finance directly any assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of government is deposed by military coup or decree, with the exception of assistance to promote democratic elections or public participation in democratic processes.

The legislation permits the resumption of U.S. assistance when the president determines and certifies to the Committees on Appropriations of both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives that subsequent to the termination of assistance a democratically elected government has taken office.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Democracy ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy.html> ) and East Asia and the Pacific ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/> ).

A transcript ( <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2006/72883.htm> ) of the State Department briefing is available on the department's Web site. A transcript ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060920-5.html> ) of Snow's remarks is available on the White House Web site.

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\*WPD307 09/20/2006

United States, China Create Strategic Economic Dialogue  
(Overarching, bilateral framework will help cement bilateral ties, Bush says) (360)

By Jane Morse  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States and China have created an overarching, bilateral framework to review economic issues between the two countries.

In a September 20 statement announcing the creation of the U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue, President Bush said that he and China's president, Hu Jintao, had discussed the "importance of maintaining strong and mutually beneficial U.S.-China economic relations" and the need to establish such a framework.

Bush said Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson would chair the U.S. side of the dialogue with support from Allan Hubbard, the director of the National Economic Council. Deborah Lehr will serve as Paulson's special envoy to the dialogue.

In China, Premier Wu Yi and Paulson, who is visiting China September 19-22, also announced the creation of the new dialogue structure. Paulson is expected to meet with President Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao during his visit.

In a joint statement released in China September 20, both sides said the dialogue would "focus on bilateral and global strategic economic issues of common interests and concerns." According to the statement, representatives from China and the United States intend to meet twice a year in alternate capitals.

The statement also says that existing bilateral dialogues and consultation mechanisms -- such as the Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, the Joint Economic Committee, and the Joint Commission on Science and Technology -- will remain unchanged and will "continue to play their positive and important role in promoting U.S.-China economic and trade cooperation."

"The economies of the United States and China have been engines of global growth," Bush said. "We must ensure that citizens of both countries benefit equitably from our growing economic relationship and that we work together to address economic challenges and opportunities."

For more on U.S. policy, see The United States and China ( <http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp105.htm> ) and Trade and Economics. ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/> )

The full text ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060920.html> ) of President Bush's statement is available on the White House Web site. The full text (

<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp105.htm> ) of the joint statement is available on the Treasury Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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U.S. Legislator Urges Bilateral Initiatives with North Korea

(United States can afford to be bold with North Korea, Representative Leach says) (560)

By Jane Morse

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific is urging the Bush administration to consider "bilateral initiatives" with North Korea.

Representative James Leach, in a September 19 speech before the Arms Control Association in Washington, said: "[T]he United States can afford to be bold in its diplomacy with North Korea. ... Talking directly with Pyongyang is neither a favor nor a capitulation."

The Six-Party Talks, which involve North and South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States, is "a good framework," he said, "but it is likely to be bolstered rather than undercut if we augment it with bilateral initiatives."

"At times there are advantages to engaging in diplomatic discussions in a multi-party framework," Leach said, "but these advantages are meager if an intransigent adversary refuses to participate or chooses to exact tributes of one kind or another in exchange for sending to a table of interlocutors, diplomats with limited authority."

The Republican from Iowa lamented the fact that one year after Pyongyang signed a joint statement of principles under which North Korea "committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs," the international community is no closer to realizing those goals. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2005/Sep/19-210095.html> ).)

"The continuation of present circumstances is particularly regrettable because time is on no one's side," Leach said. "Every day of the status quo is another day for the North Korean regime to produce additional fissile material, and another day that the people of North Korea fall further behind the remarkable economic and social march of the rest of Asia."

"Pyongyang's ongoing nuclear program, its missile tests and illicit exports have profound implications for regional stability, the international nonproliferation regime, and the national security of the United States," the U.S. lawmaker said.

"Given North Korea's track record," he said, "one cannot help but share the Administration's healthy skepticism about the DPRK's [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] strategic intentions. ... All can agree that North Korea is well-practiced at deliberately creating tensions and exploiting them for its own benefit."

Even so, "deterrence and engagement are not mutually exclusive," Leach said.

According to Leach the "ostensible unity" demonstrated in the U.N. Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1695 on July 15 "appears of doubtful value given China's stated opposition 'to any acts that would lead to further tension.'"

Resolution 1695 calls on all U.N. member states to refrain from transferring items or financial resources relating to the missile and weapons of mass destruction programs operated by North Korea. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060715174904atiayduj0.3738367> ).)

For the United States to remain "diplomatically reactive," Leach said, "as in the case of North Korea, cedes too much initiative to 'actors' whose interests are not identical with our own, and allows the North Koreans and others to bizarrely paint us as an intransigent party."

"The goal should be to induce both a negotiating commitment and an attitudinal breakthrough," Leach said.

See also "Bush, Roh Emphasize Unified Stance on North Korea ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=November&x=20051117122049ajesrom0.7810785&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html> )."

For additional information on U.S. policy, see The U.S. and the Korean Peninsula ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east\\_asia\\_pacific/north\\_korea.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/north_korea.html) ) and The Proliferation Security Initiative ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/is/img/assets/4756/brochure1.pdf> ) (PDF, 4 pages).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)  
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Laura Bush Highlights Burma Crisis in U.N. Roundtable Discussion  
(Participants cite human rights abuses, increase in drug-resistant diseases) (1180)

By Judy Aita  
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The United States will work diligently with other members of the U.N. Security Council to ensure that the crisis in Burma is not overlooked, U.S. first lady Laura Bush said September 19.

Taking advantage of media attention at the opening of the 61st General Assembly session, the first lady convened a roundtable discussion to highlight the repressive and destabilizing situation in Burma and the regime's treatment of democracy activist and Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest for most of the past 17 years.

Bush gathered experts to discuss what could be done to secure the release of political prisoners and promote national reconciliation. She also encouraged journalists attending the event to "get the story out" so that Burma's leaders would know that "they can't get away with terrible mistreatment of their citizens."

In addition to the first lady, roundtable participants included Paula Dobriansky, under secretary of state for democracy and global affairs; Ellen Sauerbrey, assistant secretary of state for population, refugees and migration; Elliott Abrams, deputy national security advisor for global democratization strategy; U.N. Under Secretary for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari; Burmese activist Hseng NOUNG, founder of the Shan Women Action Network and a contributor to the 2002 documentary "License to Rape"; Zaid Ibrahim, head of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Burma Caucus; Jack Dunford, director of the Thailand Burma Border Consortium; Dr. Chris Beyrer, director of the Johns Hopkins Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Program and the Johns Hopkins Center for Public Health & Human Rights; and Jim Jacobson, president of Christian Freedom International.

In an interview with the Washington File, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristin Silverberg called the roundtable discussion "incredibly productive and moving."

The meeting discussed ways to continue putting pressure on the Burmese regime to change its treatment toward its people, she said. According to Silverberg, the Security Council will be meeting with Gambari before his visit to Burma in October. After he returns, she said, the council will meet again to discuss possible actions.

After Gambari's last visit to Burma in May, during which he met with the head of Burma's military junta Senior General Than Shwe, the government renewed Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest for another year. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/Archive/2006/May/30-296267.html> ).)

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

All the roundtable participants urged the United States to get Security Council action on Burma, "the sooner the better."

On September 15, after a yearlong effort, the United States succeeded in having the situation in Burma officially placed on the agenda of the U.N. Security Council. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060915181057AJatiA0.7863886> ).)

Hseng spoke of the regime's use of sexual violence as tool of repression.

The practice of Burmese soldiers raping women and children continues unabated, Hseng said. Telling a moving story of the rape of an eight-year-old girl by soldiers, she said that afterwards members of the local political party visited the child's parents and gave them money and a toy for the victim.

Women are organized in villages and brought to military barracks ostensibly to "put on a fashion show." Instead, the women are raped, and some are turned into sex slaves, Hseng said.

Human trafficking is also a major problem in the country, according to the State Department.

In its Trafficking in Persons report for 2006, the department said Burma does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and "is not making significant efforts to do so."

Burmese men, women and children are trafficked to Thailand, China, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Korea and Macau for domestic service, forced and bonded labor in industrial zones and agricultural estates, and prostitution, according to the report. The Burmese military has been implicated in trafficking persons for forced labor, and there have been reports of forced enlistments of children in the Burmese army. The regime's economic mismanagement, human rights abuses and forced labor policy are driving factors behind the country's large human trafficking problem, the report says. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/07-363831.html> ).)

## POOR HEALTH CONDITIONS

Burma also has serious problems in the area of health.

Beyrer reported that Burma chronically underfunds health issues, spending less than \$1 a year per person on health and education. The regime's budget for HIV/AIDS now totals \$75,000 annually, an amount that was increased three times during the year, he said.

Most Burmese are too poor to afford medicine, but even those who can are getting inadequate doses because the drugs available to them are either counterfeit or below par, Beyrer said.

At the end of 2005, Burma had one of the most serious HIV/AIDS epidemics in Asia, with about 360,000 infected, according to the United Nations. The regime's response to HIV/AIDS remains ambivalent, the State Department says, and it has impeded humanitarian operations. In August 2005, the AIDS Global

Fund terminated its Burma operations when it could no longer ensure that its funds would go to those in need rather than to regime coffers. (See HIV/AIDS ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/hiv\\_aids.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hiv_aids.html) ).)

Because the government is not spending sufficient money on health issues, the country also has drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis and malaria that easily can be transmitted across borders. The government's handling of avian flu is also endangering the region's effort to control the threat, Beyrer said. (See Bird Flu ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/bird\\_flu.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html) ).)

## OTHER ISSUES

The flows of Burmese refugees throughout the region, illicit narcotics, HIV/AIDS and the human rights situation inside Burma are a threat to international peace and security, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton said September 18.

About 200,000 refugees who have fled conflict and persecution in Burma now live in Thailand, Malaysia, India and Bangladesh. As many as 3,000 ethnic Karen refugees entered Thailand in 2006 after several military offensives against opposition forces in Burma. As conditions worsen, hope for the refugees' safe return diminishes, according to the U.S. State Department.

The United States recently approved the applications of 2,700 Karen to resettle in the United States. Resettlement operations began August 15, and more than half of those approved are expected to arrive in the United States by October 1. The remainder will arrive before the end of 2006. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060901131416ASesuarK0.3654901> ).)

Regarding illicit drug production and trafficking, the United States has determined that the regime in 2005 again failed demonstrably to meet international counter-narcotics obligations. Burma is the second largest producer of illicit opium and produces and traffics amphetamine-type substances as well. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060918150913cmretrop0.5944025> ).)

"We want to call attention to the situation in Burma and the threat that its policies pose to the region and, more broadly, to the fact the government of Burma's policies are not changing," Bolton said.

"If we don't ratchet up the level of attention, there's no reason to think those policies will change," the ambassador said.

For additional information on U.S. policy, see U.S. Support for Democracy in Burma ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east\\_asia\\_pacific/burma.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/burma.html) ).

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\*WPD310 09/20/2006

Transcript: State Department's Shannon Addresses "Why the Americas Matter"  
(U.S. official cites link between democracy, development, security) (6900)

By pursuing an agenda that simultaneously reinforces regional democracy, development, and security, the nations of the Americas can serve as a model for other parts of the world, says Thomas Shannon, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs.

Addressing a group of Canadian diplomats, academics, and Fulbright scholars in Ottawa on September 14, Shannon began by thanking Canadians for welcoming Americans into their homes while U.S. air traffic was temporarily suspended in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

As the events of 9/11 demonstrated, the Western Hemisphere is confronting a new set of challenges that require an unprecedented degree of regional cooperation and coordination, according to Shannon. And the region's leaders have responded by recognizing that democracy, development and security are inextricably linked throughout the hemisphere, he said.

"[W]e live in a hemisphere that is democratic, a hemisphere that is committed to free markets, that is committed to economic integration," said Shannon. "From my point of view, in many ways this hemisphere has already gone through what we would call the first generation of transformational challenges by committing itself to democracy, by committing itself to fundamental human rights, and by building a consensus -- however debated it is, ... it's still a consensus -- around an economic model and an approach to economic growth."

Even so, a broad agreement on those principles also has raised questions about how best to implement them, he said. At this point, the hemisphere is grappling with "second-generation issues of governmental and societal transformation," he explained. "This is really ... about how you link democracy and development. It's about how you show that democracy is not a conservative form of government designed to protect the privileges of the elites, but is actually a revolutionary form of government that is designed to break open societies. It is designed to create opportunities not only for political participation, but for economic and social participation."

Shannon cited the adoption of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in 2001 as a remarkable advance for the region, because 34 democratically elected leaders of the hemisphere for the first time publicly committed themselves to upholding and defending democratic governance in the Americas. Simultaneously, regional leaders endorsed the idea of "free markets and economic integration through establishing a timetable for free trade over the Americas," said Shannon. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=200609131258341xeneerg0.4307215> ).)

"Now, we all know that timetable hasn't been met ... but what was important ... is that there was a commitment to free trade and a recognition that it's through economic integration that democratic governments have the means to break down economic elites and oligarchies and look for new ways so that prosperity, as it occurs, doesn't just trickle through society -- it courses through society."

The 2001 Summit of the Americas held in Quebec City marked another significant milestone -- "a commitment to create a new hemispheric security agenda" that addressed the threats of terrorism, drug trafficking, natural disasters, environmental disasters and pandemics, Shannon said, adding that this commitment "created an opening for state dialogue about security which was new and unique and fresh" by shifting much of the discussion out of defense agencies and into law enforcement, intelligence, emergency response and health agencies.

The region's fresh approach to security needs has facilitated "a level of cooperation that really had never existed before," he said.

For these reasons, and many others, the Western Hemisphere nations are poised to set an example for other regions to follow, said Shannon, adding that the openness, resiliency and economic successes enjoyed by Western Hemisphere democracies send "a strong message" to nations in the Middle East and Central Asia. "The degree to which we can show that democracy can deliver the goods will act as a source of encouragement for those countries in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world."

Conversely, "the degree to which we fail will reinforce those who have always argued that only authoritarian governments can [make] the tough decisions that are required to end poverty and inequality



and create societies that are allowed to grow," he warned. The stakes are high -- for the Western Hemisphere and for other regions as well, he said.

The Americas remain "the New World" because of the hemisphere's capacity to lead and inspire, Shannon concluded. The Western Hemisphere "still has the capability to show the rest of the world some profound and important lessons in governance and in how you protect individual liberties but operate successfully within a globalized economy."

Following is a transcript of Shannon's September 14 remarks in Ottawa:

(begin transcript)

Canada-U.S. Fulbright/Killiam Orientation,  
Cadieux Auditorium,  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,  
Ottawa, Canada

September 14, 2006

Thomas Shannon,  
Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs,  
on "Why the Americas Matter"

DR. SHANNON: Good evening. Thank you all very, very much for the opportunity. Thank you, Bill. Thank you, Michael. Sir, thank you; ma'am, thank you very much.

To all of you, to those of you who are going to be scholars, congratulations. To those of you who are here because of your interest in North America and in the Americas, thank you very much. It's an interest we share; it's a passion we share.

I think this is an appropriate moment to talk a bit about North America, but also more broadly about the hemisphere. If you will allow me a few moments, this is what I would like to do.

As Bill mentioned, having the [U.S.] secretary [of state] in Halifax and then out in Stellarton and in Pictou was a great opportunity for us to come up to Canada on September 11 and express appreciation and gratitude for the hospitality and the compassion that was shown to so many travelers, and so many of them Americans, during September 11 and the days afterwards as we tried to understand exactly what happened to us and open our airspace and bring people back into the United States.

It was especially important, I think, from an American point of view, with so many commemorative events taking place in the United States to have the opportunity to go outside the U.S. and to hold a commemorative event here, and a commemorative event that didn't focus on the death and destruction of the terrorist attacks but focused on the human response and the openness of the response from Canada.

One of the things that struck me in Halifax in the ceremony was the decision to bring in people who had worked at the airport on that day who had brought travelers into their homes, and also the decision to have several of them speak.

I'm not sure how many of you saw it; I know it was televised, but at the ceremony they had a gentleman who was effectively the duty manager who was on duty at the time of the attacks and who received a call at Halifax Airport, basically being told that he was going to have between 40 to 60 aircraft coming his way in about 30 minutes and they were all going to land in the space of several hours and effectively take an entire day's work and compress it into a very short timespan. Then they also had a high school teacher who spoke about what it was like getting word from his principal that they were going to have 300 people, you know, sleeping at the school and that all the teachers needed to begin to prepare the school for that purpose.

For me at least, it provided a very genuine and very direct, very authentic face to the response of September 11. I found it very touching. I think it underscored the depth of the human connections between the United States and Canada. I would like again to underscore our thankfulness, our gratitude, for the Canadian response to September 11.

Following the ceremony at Halifax and following the trip out to Pictou and Stellarton, about which much has been written and discussed in the press, I also had a chance to go out to Banff, where yesterday and today actually, Canada, the United States and Mexico held the second session of the North American Forum.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the North American Forum, it sprang up as a parallel structure to the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America. It was originally an effort to bring opinion-makers, private-sector leaders, university professors and presidents, and leaders of NGOs [non-governmental organizations] together with government officials from the three countries of North America to begin to talk about North American security and to begin to see if there was some way that together, the governments working with the private sector and universities and NGOs could begin to create a vision for North America and an understanding of what North America is as an entity and then how governments could be working better together to fashion more productive cooperation and address the kinds of problems we saw in the immediate aftermath of September 11.

There are three convenors or co-convenors for this. On the U.S. side it's former Secretary of State [George] Schultz, on the Mexican side it's former Finance Minister Pedro Aspe, and on the Canadian side it's the former Premier of Alberta Peter Lougheed. The first session was held last year in Sonoma. This year it's held in Banff. Next year it will be held in Mexico.

I thought it particularly appropriate that the events in Halifax were followed immediately by the conference in Banff because it linked the tragic events of September 11 to what has come out of it, which I think is a real examination of what North America is and an effort to understand how we -- as different as we are in our identities and as different as we are in our national sovereignty -- Canada, the United States and Mexico do share a common place, do share a common market and increasingly are connected demographically and culturally, and how only by understanding this and looking for ways to enhance that degree of connectedness are we going to remain competitive in the world, but also are we going to be in a position to protect our open societies against threats which aren't going away. For that reason, I thought it useful to come here today.

Stephen Krasner was going to be your speaker. He sends his deep regrets for not being able to come out today. I can't match Stephen. He is a brilliant scholar, and as director of policy studies he has a very, very important role to play in the State Department and in fashioning with the secretary our larger approach, our larger diplomatic approach, to the world. But I was happy to step in for him because I think this is a very hopeful moment in the hemisphere. I think there is a lot of opportunity out there. This might not be immediately evident when you read the press or look at what is presented in TV programs and analyses, but my own view is that this is the hemisphere that has made incredible strides and progress over the last several decades and really is positioned to do tremendous things, and North America is going to be a very important part of that.

If you don't mind, what I thought I would like to do is start by taking about what I think the central issue in the hemisphere is, why this is important for the rest of the world, talk about how the hemisphere has sought to create an agenda -- a common agenda -- among democratic nations, how the United States has engaged in it, and then, finally, how North America relates to it.

I chose the title "Why the Americas Matter" simply because the news so often focuses on events in Iraq or events in Afghanistan or the larger war on terror that we sometimes forget that we live in a hemisphere that is democratic, a hemisphere that is committed to free markets, that is committed to economic integration and that is committed to developing the individual capacity necessary to take advantage of the

economic opportunities that are being presented through the kind of economic growth we have been able to achieve in the region more broadly.

From my own point of view, in many ways this hemisphere has already gone through what we would call the first generation of transformational challenges by committing itself to democracy, by committing itself to fundamental human rights, and by building a consensus -- however debated it is, but it's still a consensus -- around an economic model and an approach to economic growth.

What we are looking at right now in this hemisphere really is the second-generation problem, or second-generation issues, of governmental and societal transformation. This is really, in the Western Hemisphere, about how you link democracy and development. It's about how you show that democracy is not a conservative form of government designed to protect the privileges of elites, but is actually a revolutionary form of government that is designed to break open societies. It is designed to create opportunities not only for political participation, but for economic and social participation, and that as we think about democracy we need to think about it in much larger terms than just voting or electoral mechanisms or machineries. We need to think about it in terms of a democratic state -- not just a democratic government, but a democratic state -- and all that means for political citizenship, for economic citizenship and for social citizenship.

In a region which has become democratic, which has committed itself to a certain economic model, we obviously face big problems, big social problems, in relationship to poverty, in relationship to inequality and to exclusion, both political exclusion and social exclusion. One of the striking things over the last bunch of years is how this region has sought to deal with it.

I would like to start by taking you all back to April of 2001, to Quebec City, where the Summit of the Americas met in difficult and contentious circumstances, if you remember. Although Quebec City has the fame of being a fortress, it was even more so that day. You will recall that this came after Seattle and Genoa and a period of kind of anti-globalization demonstrations which were quite dramatic and intense. The Summit of the Americas was seen as a perfect opportunity for these forces to kind of appear on the steps of Quebec City and try to break through and disrupt the Summit of the Americas, which so many assumed was just going to kind of repeat the cant of globalization.

The irony is, of course, that as the demonstrators outside were expressing their concern about what was happening inside, what was happening inside was something quite remarkable in the sense that the democratic leaders who were participating in that event for the first time committed the Western Hemisphere to democracy. Through the democracy clause of the leader's statement, the 34 democratic heads of state said that to participate in the Summit of the Americas process, countries had to be democratic, and that countries which, for whatever reason, had a constitutional rupture would then be examined by leaders to determine whether or not that country was worthy of continuing participation in the Summit of the Americas process.

What was striking about that was that the Summit of the Americas process is not just a leaders' meeting once every four years. It's a series of ministerial meetings, it's free-trade talks, it's an entire structure of engagement in the hemisphere. To make the requirement that countries be democratic to participate in it was a striking step forward in the hemisphere.

Just as importantly, the leaders instructed their foreign ministers to negotiate an Inter-American Democratic Charter without telling them what the substance of that charter needed to be. They instructed them to negotiate that charter and to take the democracy clause that the leaders had agreed to in the summit process and incorporate it into the inter-American system, into the Organization of American States, into the Inter-American Development Bank and into all the other committees and commissions that make up the inter-American system. This was obviously a large order, but one that was done in quick fashion.

The other striking things that came out of the Quebec City summit was a broad commitment to free markets and economic integration through establishing a timetable for free trade over the Americas.

Now, we all know that timetable hasn't been met. We all know that, especially with the suspension of talks in Doha and the inability to come to terms on agricultural issues, our ability to actually close a larger free-trade [deal] over the Americas in the near term is limited, but what was important then and is important still is that there was a commitment to free trade and a recognition that it's through economic integration that democratic governments have the means to break down economic elites and oligarchies and look for new ways so that prosperity, as it occurs, doesn't just trickle through society -- it courses through society.

In that regard, while making a commitment to free markets and economic integration, the leaders also made a commitment to investing in people. I will elaborate on this more in just a minute, but what was important about this commitment to invest in people is that it was a recognition, which would be kind of manifested more broadly in the next year in 2002 at the U.N. conference on financing development in Monterrey, Mexico, of a new paradigm of development, recognizing that countries had to be responsible for their national development policies and that those countries that could be donor nations needed to link in some fashion to a policy process so that their assistance connected to a policy process that created the national infrastructure to allow countries to take advantage of economic opportunity created through trade but also individual capacity, so that through education, through health care, and through personal security, citizens in all the countries could take advantage of economic opportunity as it presented itself.

The other term which I think coming out of Quebec was important was a commitment to create a new hemispheric security agenda. For the longest time, our security agenda has been defined by the Rio Treaty and by confidence-building measures between states, the assumption being that the essential vulnerability or threat in the hemisphere was state-on-state violence.

What the leaders again instructed their foreign ministers to do was to take another look at the security agenda and to adjust it to a reality in which the real threats to states were not other states in a hemisphere that had committed itself to democracy, but instead the threats were terrorism, drug trafficking, natural disasters, environmental disasters and pandemics, and in so doing, created an opening for state dialogue about security which was new and unique and fresh. It actually took a lot of that dialogue out of defense ministries and put it in law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies, in crisis and emergency response agencies, and also in health agencies, especially those that dealt with pandemics. This was, I think, an important step forward in again building kind of the connective tissue within the hemisphere that allows a conversation and a level of cooperation that really had never existed before.

When we look back on that summit, I think what we see is: number one, a creation of a consensus around political values and around economic models, but also clear instructions to governments to begin to develop the mechanisms and the action plan or the agenda necessary to make these commitments real. The governments have responded, bureaucracies have responded, through the Inter-American Democratic Charter. The OAS was able to take the democracy clause of the Quebec City summit and put it into the inter-American system, but it was able to do it in a way that it's really worth taking a minute or two to understand what the Inter-American Charter, the Democratic Charter, really is.

I'm not sure how many of you have had a chance to look at it in any detail. The first article of that charter, the first clause of the first article, says that democracy is a right of all the peoples of the Americas and that their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it; in other words, democracy is a right.

Now, this is a radical statement. Typically, if you talk to people who study these things, they will argue that democracy is a form of government that is made up or constructed from fundamental rights such as freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom of belief, but that it is these fundamental rights that are liberties and freedoms, not the form of government. But the foreign ministers were arguing the opposite -- not the opposite; they were arguing that although it has component parts that are liberties, democracy itself is a right. This was a unique statement. It was a unique statement for the Americas, I think it was a unique statement in the world.

Beyond that, it said that governments have an obligation to promote and defend democracy, so it creates not only a right for individuals and peoples, but an obligation for governments.

The second clause of the first article says that democracy is essential for the political, social and economic development of the Americas. This statement is just as radical as the first, because what it's proposing is that for development to be real, it has to be democratic. What the foreign ministers were attempting to articulate here was a belief that this hemisphere needed to fashion a new understanding of development and a new model for development, and not a model that is capitalist, socialist or communist, but a model that is democratic.

I think that this has highlighted the essential issue that we are facing in this hemisphere right now, which is this linkage between democracy and development and the ability to show that democracy can deliver the goods, that at the end of the day, as I mentioned earlier, democracy is not a conservative form of government, that in fact it has the potential to be a very revolutionary form of government, a revolutionary form of government that protects individual rights and liberties but at the same time gives people a voice in their national destiny and recognizes them in a citizenship which is all-inclusive and which, more importantly, takes the step beyond democratic government to the recognition that we live in democratic states, and as members of democratic states, our government has responsibilities also to engage in our societies and operate in our societies as democratic actors.

In some ways the challenges that we face now in the hemisphere are the product of the consensus that was created in Quebec City and then the commitment that was built through the Inter-American Democratic Charter. One other point which is very important to make here: the Inter-American Democratic Charter was approved in Lima, Peru, on September 11, 2001.

In fact, I was in Lima, Peru, with Secretary Powell, and it was during a breakfast with [Peruvian] President Toledo that Secretary Powell was informed of the attacks at the World Trade Center and then in the Pentagon. It was while he was traveling from the presidential palace to the site of the OAS Special General Assembly that was considering the Democratic Charter that he was informed that there was a fourth aircraft out there and nobody knew where it was.

He made a decision in Lima not to return immediately to Washington. He made a decision to stay and see the Inter-American Democratic Charter approved. In the speech that he gave, an impromptu speech obviously that he gave, at the Special General Assembly, he told the gathered foreign ministers that approving the Inter-American Democratic Charter was the most appropriate response that the Americas could give to this terrorist act because at the end of the day the terrorist act was not directed against the United States, it was directed against open societies. It was directed against democracies. It was directed against countries that built their political systems around individual rights and liberties.

Obviously, the Inter-American Democratic Charter was approved by acclamation in Lima. For us who had been working on it for some time, it was a profoundly bittersweet moment: sweet obviously because the promise of the Quebec City summit had been realized in an important agreement, bitter obviously because our country was under attack and we knew what this was going to mean for us in the years to come.

The fact that September 11 kind of links terrorism and democracy in such a dramatic way is important, and the fact that the charter itself links democracy and development is also vitally important. One of the things that we have tried to do, the United States government has tried to do as it establishes its policy in the region and as it looks at how it expends resources is to make sure that our policy corresponds to the structure or the consensus that was built in Quebec City, whether it be commitment to consolidation of democratic institutions, whether it be promoting economic opportunity and prosperity, whether it be investing in people or whether it be in working to protect the democratic state from non-state actors. In other words, our policy -- and this might surprise some of you -- really was conceived through the summit process. Its structure reflects the summit process, and as we try to implement it, we try to implement it in a way that corresponds to that process and corresponds to the priorities laid out in that process. I think we have done a pretty good job of it, and I will run you through a few numbers just to give you an idea.

For instance, the Bush administration has doubled foreign direct assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean. When President Bush came into office, the United States was spending about \$800 million a year in foreign direct assistance to the region. That is now about \$1.6 billion. It has been \$1.6 billion for the past five years. In fact, if you look at the entire amount of money that the previous administration spent in the region, it was a little under \$7 billion. The Bush administration hit that figure at about four years, so everything since then has been kind of an add-on.

What is important also is that this money has been concentrated in specific areas. The development side of the equation has been enhanced. There has been an important alternative development component put into the counter-drug activities, especially in the Andes, and a lot of money has also gone to Haiti in order to help Haiti work itself through a very difficult political moment and show that a democracy can rebuild. A democratic government, with the help of the U.N. and countries like Canada, can rebuild a democratic state.

The Bush administration increased funding to the Peace Corps by about 40 percent and put about a thousand new Peace Corps volunteers into the region and into countries that historically had not had Peace Corps volunteers, like Mexico.

The Bush administration created the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Millennium Challenge Accounts, which are designed to take the principles developed at the Monterey U.N. meeting on financing development, linking the policy of developing countries to donor assistance and providing new monies and new funds to promote governments that make the right kinds of decisions, the right kind of policy decisions about fighting corruption, improving education, improving health care and creating an environment in which people develop individual capacity. The administration has put about \$500 million up to this point -- new money -- into the region through the Millennium Challenge Account, and it will put additional money in it, if we are able to negotiate compacts with Bolivia and with Guyana.

Also, through our HIV/AIDS programs, both bilaterally and through global funds, we put about another \$500 million into the region.

Then, through trade and preferential access programs, we have -- we think -- dramatically reshaped the economic dynamic in the region and have begun to foster a series of microeconomic revolutions in specific countries where we have free-trade agreements that are really all about tearing down old economic structures and old ways of doing things and opening up market space and creating an environment in which new companies can emerge and in which small and medium-sized enterprises have a chance and create economies that pull people out of the informal sector and into the formal sector, where not only do they pay taxes but they are also covered by labor law and by social security regimes.

Right now, about 85 percent to 90 percent of all goods coming from Latin America and the Caribbean to the United States come in duty-free, either through GSP, through our Caribbean Basin Initiative, through the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act, or through our free-trade agreements. Right now, our free-trade agreements cover about two-thirds of the entire GDP of the hemisphere.

We think that this kind of response to the region, that this kind of engagement with the region, has been positive. I will let the Canadians speak for themselves, but I know the Canadian engagement has been just as robust. This is important, because it really is changing a dynamic in the region and it is changing how people understand their futures and how they understand their engagement with other countries. This is why, from our point of view, we have to -- and I will underscore "have" -- we have to maintain a hemispheric approach in our policy.

We have to maintain a pan-American approach to our policy, because without that, South America in particular -- parts of South America -- really run the risk of becoming Pluto, of kind of floating off to the far end of the universe and eventually being declared not a planet. I don't say it entirely in jest, because South America in particular has a tendency to parochialism. It has a tendency to close in on itself. Even with all the activity that countries like Brazil and others are doing to try to open the region up, and the

degree to which the Chileans have been reaching out very aggressively, there is -- I'm not quite sure how to describe it or articulate it -- but historically there has been a tendency to look inward, to not necessarily see itself as part of a larger hemispheric project. We have to do everything possible to not allow that to happen, to not allow that break to occur.

This is actually a moment in which I can talk a bit about the challenges that we face in the region, and especially the challenges to the consensus that we built through the Quebec City summit process and then through all the summits that have come after it.

Obviously, one of the most vocal and visible challenges of this consensus is Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. Chavez has a message which resonates in some parts of Latin America, especially on the fringes of political society. We have seen it expressed and manifested in a variety of ways, one of the most dramatic being during the Mar del Plata Summit when a people's summit, a counter-summit, was held as an effort again to attack the larger free-trade agenda of the region -- not just the United States, but the region -- but also as a response, a negative response, to the impact of globalization.

This challenge is really a challenge of vision. It's a challenge of ideas. We need to understand it that way and we need to respond to it in that way. In other words, we really shouldn't see it as a political threat. We need to see it as a challenge to us to improve our ability to communicate, but more important, to improve our ability to provide results.

What I mean by this is that in some ways, what we see in this competing vision is something that we have seen and heard before. The vision is based on personalistic policies. It has a heavy authoritarian overlay and it sees democracy as a means to channel class conflict. It sees democracy as a means to choose leaders but not as a method of government. The method of government is really about trying to address the problems of class conflict and class divisions through an elected government but acting in an authoritarian way and doing so by concentrating resources back to the state, back to the public sector, and by resisting economic integration, the belief being that economic integration actually degrades and erodes the power of the state and that the state is necessary to address the underlying social problems that especially South American countries face.

From our point of view, at least, we have seen this movie. We have heard these arguments. We know what the result is. It's broken institutions, it's failed economies, and it's a suffocation of civil society. This is a message that resonates because of desperation. It's a message that resonates because of the frustration that people in some countries feel about governments that aren't delivering the goods.

One of the challenges that we face, one of the things we need to do, is look for ways to make sure that governments that have made a commitment to democracy, governments that have made a commitment to free markets and economic integration, can succeed. Most of them are succeeding. Those who aren't are not succeeding because their institutions are weak and because the political dynamic in the country is so fractious that there is no possibility for continuity of policy over time. In this regard, the inter-American system has institutions and organizations that can help these countries.

In fact, one of the important aspects of the Inter-American Democratic Charter is that it creates a means for countries in the hemisphere to express solidarity and provide institutional assistance to countries that are going through democratic crises, not only in terms of electoral observation but also in terms of a variety of other interventions that can be done. We are only beginning to understand the power and the strength of the Inter-American Democratic Charter in this regard. There is a lot more that we can be doing. There is a lot more creativity that we can be bringing to this issue.

I guess the central point here as we look at this kind of -- I don't want to use the word "battle," but as we look at what these competing visions mean and how it is we are going to address them, ultimately we have to address them through results. We can't address them through rhetoric. We can't address them through ideological attack. We have to do it by showing that we have the capability of linking democracy and development and delivering the goods and services that many of the countries in the region need [in

order] to address the underlying problems of poverty and [in]equality and exclusion. I think we can do it. In fact, I think there is tremendous opportunity out there to do it.

When you look at what countries like Chile and El Salvador have been able to do in terms of reducing poverty levels, and especially critical poverty levels, there are lots of good models. There are lots of approaches that work. It also requires a degree of flexibility on our part, as we understand that countries all have an internal political dynamic that needs to be worked out and that what we need to be doing is looking for ways to help to facilitate that process, to help these countries work this out.

In this regard, I believe that there is still a consensus around democracy, free markets and economic integration, and a consensus around the importance of investing in people so that they don't become dependent on the state, but they become independent in themselves, that they have the capacity to take advantage of economic opportunity. I believe that Canada and the United States can play a huge role in this.

This kind of brings me back to North America. What we have been able to accomplish through NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement] has been remarkable in terms of dramatic economic growth and dramatic growth of trade, but NAFTA was an agreement which, once done, was kind of left to itself and left to the private sector. It was really through the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) that governments finally re-engaged in a NAFTA process and finally began to look for ways to enhance NAFTA, but at the same time, build into it other components, especially on the security side -- recognizing in the aftermath of 9/11 that it's through protecting our security that we protect our prosperity, and we protect the well-being of our democratic institutions, but also in terms of building new constituencies for governments.

One of the interesting things about the Security and Prosperity Partnership is that it has components that allow those who use the border all the time, whether they be the private sector and movement of goods and services, whether it be state and municipal institutions along the border, the frontier, or other people who have an abiding interest in borders, whether they be NGOs or universities, or who have studied them at great length, to provide input to governments and to enhance our understanding of where friction points still exist and what more we can do in terms of harmonizing regulations, in terms of improving procedures and processes, but also in developing levels of cooperation and collaboration that haven't existed before.

When the SPP was first conceived several years ago, it was seen as something that would be done as an add-on to NAFTA and taking into account the events of September 11, but it has evolved over time. With the disasters that we in the United States faced because of Hurricane Katrina, because of the fears raised by the possibility of an avian flu pandemic, our understanding of security in North America and its relationship to trade has also changed and evolved.

What we are doing in North America today is consolidating democratic states, integrating them economically but then providing a security overlay and a level of cooperation and dialogue that will strengthen the economic institutions, strengthen our ability to protect and promote our prosperity, and enhance our ability to create the opportunity that people can actually take advantage of. In this way, we have taken a model of economic integration that is largely accepted around the hemisphere and raised it one level higher. It's a huge challenge for the rest of the hemisphere, but it's a challenge that we have to push them to accept.

We think that the degree to which we can improve our cooperation and collaboration within North America will actually be effectively pulling Central and South America and the Caribbean with us and letting them know that we can indeed address the fundamental problem of democracy and development in North America with Mexico as a vital partner, look for ways to address profound issues like immigration, and create an environment in which our democratic societies, our open societies, are secure. This is obviously important for us, it's important for you, it's important for Mexico, it's important for other countries in the region.



One of the reasons why I wanted to say why the Americas matter, aside from the obvious interest to ourselves, is that the degree to which we can show that democracy can deliver the goods, the degree to which we can link democracy and development and show that you can have open societies that are resilient, that can protect themselves and can protect their economic institutions is that we are sending a very strong message to those parts of the world that are just beginning a democratization process, whether it be in the Middle East or whether it be in south and central Asia. The degree to which we can show that democracy can deliver the goods will act as a source of encouragement for those who are really working to democratize countries in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world. The degree to which we fail will reinforce those who have always argued that only authoritarian governments can address the tough decisions that are required to end poverty and inequality and create societies that are allowed to grow.

For that reason I think that the Americas is still the New World. I think that the Americas still has the capacity to show the rest of the world some profound and important lessons in governance and in how you protect individual liberties but operate successfully in a globalized economy.

Why don't I stop there. I'm happy to take any of your questions or comments.

Thank you.

(end transcript)

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\*WPD311 09/20/2006

U.S. Report Hails Strategic Importance of Canada to United States  
(Report calls Canada the U.S.'s most important trade partner) (470)

By Eric Green  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Canada has become the most important trading partner of the United States, accounting for almost 20 percent of all U.S. trade, according to a new report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The report, released September 15 by USDA's Economic Research Service, said U.S. exports to Canada, measured as a share of the U.S. gross domestic product, have more than doubled since 1960.

In 2004, U.S. exports of goods and services to Canada exceeded combined U.S. exports to Mexico and Japan, the second- and third-largest U.S. export markets, said the report, entitled Canada: A Macroeconomic Study of the United States' Most Important Trade Partner.

Written by USDA's Paul Sundell and Mathew Shane, the report said Canada has become "an increasingly important strategic and economic partner" for the United States. The report said the United States depends increasingly on Canada for supplies of strategic resources such as energy, metals and lumber, and that Canada is the largest supplier of energy to America in the form of oil and oil products, natural gas and electricity.

Sundell and Shane said their report provides an analysis of the Canadian economy, focusing on its trade with the United States and the rest of the world, and evaluates Canada's long-term growth prospects. The authors said "knowledge of Canada's economic structure, trade patterns, and growth prospects is increasingly important in understanding the overall U.S. trade outlook, especially the export outlook for diverse U.S. industries that are heavily involved in exporting to Canada."

The report's release follows a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Stellarton, Canada, September 12 in which she praised the U.S.-Canadian relationship as "very, very strong." During a joint briefing with Canadian Foreign Minister Peter MacKay, Rice said that even though the two countries have had their policy differences, the United States and Canada have "the most active of relationships at the level of people-to-people not just at the levels of government."

The authors of the USDA report said that "it is not surprising that Canada and the United States are each other's most important trade partner," given their geographical proximity, "open trade regimes" and other factors.

Canada's favorable long-term economic growth, according to the report, will continue to receive a boost from expected strong U.S. growth in its gross domestic product (at 3 percent or more) for the remainder of 2006 and 2007.

The full text ( <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/WRS0602/wrs0602.pdf> ) of the report (PDF, 36 pages) is available on the USDA Web site.

A transcript ( <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/72072.htm> ) of the Rice-MacKay briefing is available on the State Department Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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\*WPD312 09/20/2006

Transcript: Scholar Discusses Free Worship in Politically Closed Societies  
(USINFO Webchat transcript, September 20) (970)

Scott Appleby, a professor of history and director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame, answered questions in a September 20 USINFO Democracy Dialogue on religious freedom in closed societies.

Following is the transcript:

(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Bureau of International Information Programs  
USINFO Webchat Transcript

Guest: Scott Appleby  
Date: September 20, 2006  
Time: 10:00 a.m. EDT (1400 GMT)

Democracy Dialogues: Freedom of Religion in Closed Societies

IIP Moderator: Welcome to a USINFO webchat. The webchat on Freedom of Religion in Closed Societies will take place on September 20.

Question [IRC Cairo - Ali Eid]: I think there is a connection between peace and prosperity between destitution and war and conflict and terrorism.

Scott Appleby: Clearly this is the case. Economic development is another name for peace, or at least a precondition for sustainable peace. You might wish to consult Jeffrey Sachs, "The End Of Poverty."

Q [NEA IRCs]: At the era when individualism, competition and self achievement have gulped down people throughout the world, religions are set to subtle and get people to reference ideals. Beside, religion is a strong scene setter especially in closed societies. Shouldn't there be an authority to set border lines when it comes to criticizing for religious practices? This is with reference to last May Danish cartoons and the Pope's Ratisbonne discourse last week. Thanks

Answer [Scott Appleby]: It would be useful if the leaders of the world's religions met to establish guidelines for public religious discourse, and discourse about other religions in particular. One rule might be: name the sins of your own tradition first, any time you make reference to the violence instigated by another religion.

Q [IRC Cairo]: My name is Ali Eid, a Ph.D student. Do you agree with me that the western world needs to be educated about Islam and the Arab world?

A: To Ali Eid: yes, the Western world is hopelessly ignorant of Islam, a fact that stands behind much of the miscommunication and inadequate U.S. policy that affects Muslims around the world.

Q [IRC Cairo]: Is it true that you can face discrimination in U.S. if you are a Muslim?

A: Unfortunately, yes, some Muslims in the United States may experience subtle or not so subtle forms of discrimination at the hands of bigoted or simply uninformed Americans. This is not the case with the majority of Americans, who are decent and generous people. But a minority is looking for a scapegoat, and they find an easy target in Muslims.

Q [IRC Cairo]: Do you think people in Egypt have less religion freedom like in the USA?

A: Definitely. In the United States, despite some forms of (illegal) discrimination, religious belief and practice of any kind is protected by law, and religious freedom is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution's famous First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This religious freedom is a hallmark of American society. Were U.S. Christians to openly and flagrantly persecute Muslims in the way Muslims and others persecute Coptic Christians in Egypt, the American government would arrest and prosecute those Christians.

Q [IRC Cairo]: What about the Islamic contribution to world civilization?

A: Little known and mostly misunderstood. From algebra to medieval philosophy, Islamic contributions to world civilization are little known here.

Q [IRC Cairo - Ali Eid]: What is the Role of International NGOs in building global security?

A: The role of NGOs in building security is significant, though the potential is underdeveloped. For the most part, NGOs currently contribute to security by enhancing communications, serving minority populations, developing and staffing conflict resolution and peacebuilding programs, providing humanitarian aid to displaced populations and the like. But not enough study has been done on ways NGOs can directly contribute to security, as that term is commonly understood.

IIP Moderator: For more on this topic join us for a USINFO webchat "Democracy Dialogues: The Role of International NGOs in Promoting Religious Freedom ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/cherry\\_17\\_oct\\_2006.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/cherry_17_oct_2006.html) )" on October 17 at 10:00 EST.

Q [IRC Cairo]: My name is Ali Eid; I Think the Muslim World needs to change your Communications media systems to offer the core of Islam values and principles to the world.

A: Media companies and outlets serving the United States have this responsibility, and some are trying. Several U.S. Foundations, for example, are focusing attention and funds to improve public education about Islam.

Q [IRC Cairo]: At the international level we need CO-OPERATION WITH UN TO VITAL DIALOGUES BETWEEN MUSLIM WORLD AND THE WESTERN WORLD.

A: Yes, I completely agree. Dialogue must occur at all levels: high and mid-level government and diplomacy, business, religion, educational institutions, media, and so on. There is no alternative if we are to find common ground and help one another prosper.

Q [IRC Cairo]: Do you think Religion dialogues can improve peace in the world?

A: Definitely. Religions can become powerful mediators between cultures and even between governments.

IIP Moderator: To learn more about the experiences of Muslims in the United States, please read the transcript of a USINFO webchat, "Young Muslim Life in America ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/dauod\\_03\\_30\\_2006.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/dauod_03_30_2006.html) )."

Q [IRC Cairo - Ali Eid]: Thank you for kind information and I send warm greetings from Egypt.

A: And all best wishes to you in Egypt.

IIP Moderator: We would like to thank all of our participants and Mr. Appleby for taking the time to webchat with us today. The webchat is now closed. [A transcript of today's Webchat will be available on our USINFO Webchat Station ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html> ).]

(While guests are chosen for their expertise, the views expressed by the guests are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.)

(end transcript)

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\*WPD313 09/20/2006

Byliner: Kenyan Government, U.S. Military Build School in Lamu, Kenya  
(U.S. military group has completed more than 25 projects in Kenya) (660)

The following article was published September 11 on the Web site of the Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, a unit of U.S. Central Command that conducts operations and training to help host nations combat terrorism in order to establish a secure environment and enable regional stability. There are no republication restrictions.

(begin byliner)

11 September 2006

Communities Come Together to Celebrate New School in Lamu, Kenya

By Chief Mass Communications Specialist Robert Palomares  
U.S. Navy

Lamu, Kenya -- An explosion of color and sound celebrated the dedication of the new Mokowe Secondary School, which was built in cooperation between the Kenyan government, the U.S. Embassy and the Civil Affairs Team, part of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

Local residents, waving small American and Kenyan flags, erupted in traditional songs and dances, accompanied by drumming. Drummers used plastic containers, metal plates, as well as conventional drums.

Construction on the school was originally started in 1997 and was halted briefly because of the lack of funds. But the project was regenerated in 2003, when two classrooms were completed.

In 2004, CJTF-HOA's Civil Affairs team accepted the school districts' proposal to complete four classrooms, administration offices, two laboratory classrooms and toilets for students and teachers.

The following year, two dormitories and four additional classrooms were built. In addition, two 20,000-liter water tanks were built into the school compound.

Currently, there are 86 students enrolled in the school with a faculty of four.

"We appreciate what the American government has donated to the community, which approximates 21 million Kenyan Shillings," said Abdi Juano, chairman of the Mokowe Secondary School.

"This is once again another big and commendable project undertaken by the government of the United States of America through its local embassy and Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa," said Omar Mohamed Famau, chairman of the county council of Lamu. "Education has always been the key to development of any nation and this is a big step towards development of Lamu and our county."

"Allow me to thank the American people for their tireless efforts in assisting Lamu people in various development activities since 2003. We request this continues," Famau said.

"God has graced us with a beautiful day to celebrate the completion of the Mokowe Secondary School," said U.S. Navy Capt. Stephen Johnson, Chief of Staff for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. "This project represents teamwork between Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, the government of Kenya and the citizens of Mokowe, a team who worked together to complete this wonderful school."

This project, he said, is one of more than 25 projects that CJTF-HOA has completed in Kenya.

The project represents an investment of more than 22 million Shillings, a long-term investment in the education of and the future of the children of Mokowe.

"Education is central to much that is important," Johnson told the crowd of more than 100 local residents. "Education makes our communities and nations strong and prosperous, it increases opportunity, it helps build successful families and responsible citizens, it is the key to our children realizing their full potential, and education is the key to a secure future."

He stressed that continued teamwork is necessary to provide and obtain the best possible education. Teachers, parents, students must all work together to reach this goal. "I am confident that these new facilities will inspire and foster exactly that," he added.

"I know that the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa stands committed with Kenya and our other coalition partners to foster regional peace and stability and give these children the opportunity to use their education to build a secure and prosperous future," Johnson said.

After the speeches, local residents danced and sang in celebration of the new school.

(end byliner)

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\*WPD314 09/20/2006

Initiative Aims To Help Millions in Africa Access Clean Water

(First lady Laura Bush announces "PlayPumps" private-public partnership) (430)

By Kathryn McConnell  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is partnering with two major nonprofit organizations to help bring clean drinking water to millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa.

In announcing the public-private partnership September 20 in New York, first lady Laura Bush called for other partners to join the effort to help up to 10 million people access safe water by 2010 through the installation of 4,000 pumps in schools and communities.

Bush spoke at the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative, held in conjunction with the opening of the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly. Joining Bush at the launch of the initiative were leaders of the two partner organizations, Case Foundation and the MCJ Foundation.

The United States is committing \$10 million toward a goal of \$60 million to fund the initiative, called the PlayPumps Alliance, Bush said. The alliance will connect playground "merry-go-rounds" to water pumps and storage tanks, using the energy of children's play to turn pump wheels and bring clean water above ground.

Bush said access to clean water is essential to both health and education. Without clean water, she said, people suffering from HIV and AIDS cannot take needed medications safely and their weak immune systems are exposed to water-borne illnesses. Also, water-related illnesses keep children from attending school. In particular, the daily task of finding clean water for households, usually assigned to women and girls, keeps girls out of classrooms, she said.

PlayPumps is the latest example of partnerships involving U.S. support for sustainable international development and for addressing the problems of poverty, lack of education and pandemic disease, Bush said.

One example, she said, is the President's Malaria Initiative, launched in June 2005. By the end of September, the initiative will have reached approximately 6 million Africans through national malaria control programs, she said. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2005/Jul/01-739276.html> ).)

Another is the Mothers-to-Mothers project in South Africa, funded by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The project helps HIV-infected pregnant women receive support to keep their unborn children HIV-free. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2005/Jul/13-485712.html> ).)

"Through the generosity of governments, contributions from the private sector and the leadership of the governments of developing countries, "we can succeed in helping people everywhere build a healthier, more prosperous and more hopeful world for their children," Bush said.

The Clinton Global Initiative is a nonprofit project funded by a foundation established by former President Bill Clinton.

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\*WPD315 09/20/2006

Save the Children Helping War-Affected Children Through Education  
(Partnership for a Better Life) (520)

"We were tired of their attacks and the war. Children were dead. Parents were dead. There was no school. Everything was bad and in chaos," said a 15-year-old girl in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

A series of wars in DRC between 1996 and 2003 impoverished the nation and traumatized the children. More than 3.5 million people were killed and millions more were displaced.

With conflict still occurring in some provinces, more than 5 million children of primary school age still are still not getting an education, and more than 6 million 12- to 17-year-olds have never been to school. Children have been forced to join militias, raped and abducted from school. Schools have been burned or turned into military bases or shelter for people who were forced to leave their homes. Teachers have not been paid for years.

In the early 1970s, school enrollment rates were high for the region. Since then, the education system has been damaged seriously and parents are funding not just schools, but the whole administrative system. As a result, in the conflict-affected eastern regions of the DRC, half the population cannot afford to send its children to school. Many out-of-school children were or are associated with armed groups -- either forcibly or voluntarily because of an absence of other opportunities, and many, particularly girls, have despaired of ever getting an education.

The U.S.-based humanitarian organization Save the Children is sending help from the American people to help increase the number of children going to school in the remote North and South Kivu provinces in eastern DRC. Working with six schools in three districts, Save the Children is providing an accelerated learning program for older children who missed out on primary education and offering vocational training.

With local communities, the organization set up committees -- bringing together school directors, teachers, parents and children -- to identify those children who are most vulnerable and help people understand the importance of education and the fact that every child has the right to it.

Teachers were initially reluctant to work with non-fee paying children because they rely on fees for their salaries. But eventually, after schools were rehabilitated and school materials and teacher training provided, they were persuaded. Eventually all schools were willing to accept non-fee paying children identified as particularly vulnerable because they had suffered during the war.

A real strength of Save the Children's education program in the region has been the provision of different types of efforts to meet the different needs identified in community workshops. The program now is being expanded so that girls who have babies as a result of being involved with armed groups can attend courses.

Education is an important means of providing protection, especially for children who may otherwise be ostracized by their communities because they have been associated with armed groups.

Once children are accepted into school, they are accepted into the community, according to the new Save the Children report "Rewrite the Future" ([http://www.savethechildren.org/news/releases/release\\_091206.asp?stationpub=i\\_hpln\\_091206&ArticleID=&NewsID=](http://www.savethechildren.org/news/releases/release_091206.asp?stationpub=i_hpln_091206&ArticleID=&NewsID=) )."

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\*WPD316 09/20/2006  
U.S. Global Pandemic Assistance Nears \$400 Million  
(International pandemic partnership enters second year) (850)

By Charlene Porter  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States is boosting its contributions to the international effort to combat avian and pandemic influenza, bringing U.S. contributions over the past year to \$392 million, according to a September 20 announcement by U.S. Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky.

The announcement was made in New York in conjunction with the U.N. General Assembly session one year after President Bush had announced formation of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI) at the same forum. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Archive/2005/Sep/14-339908.html> ).)

"We need only to look back to the SARS outbreak of three years ago," Dobriansky said, "to understand that the social, economic and political impacts of a virulent flu pandemic could be devastating."

In a statement from Washington, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt also endorsed the early voluntary implementation of the international regulations, and cited other examples of cooperation between the United States and the World Health Organization (WHO) in the global effort against avian and pandemic influenza.

"We are funding the Specimen Transport Fund, managed by the Secretariat of the World Health Organization," Leavitt's statement said. "It is a key innovation in getting samples from affected countries in a timely and secure fashion."

Ninety-three nations have joined IPAPI, along with 20 international organizations.

Dr. David Nabarro, senior U.N. coordinator for avian and human influenza, UNICEF Director Ann Venneman and Dr. David Heymann, director of the communicable diseases cluster at the WHO, joined Dobriansky at the press conference.

## INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS

"The World Health Assembly [WHA] has requested that WHO begin implementation of the revised International Health Regulations," Heymann said, "this year for avian influenza and next year for the framework that will involve other diseases as well."

The WHA unanimously adopted the revised regulations in May 2005, and they are scheduled to enter into force in June 2007. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=May&x=20050527145138cmretrop0.5953028&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html> ).)

The broadened purpose, according to WHO, is to "prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade."

Heymann said a group of experts will meet for the first time September 25, forming a task force on avian influenza as part of the international health regulation framework.



The group will review evidence bases on containing outbreaks, stockpiling, global vaccine pandemic planning, and virus information sharing through WHO and other databases, he said.

“WHO is very pleased to be a partner in this larger partnership dealing with preparedness for avian influenza,” he said.

## NATIONAL PLANS

IPAPI was formed in response to concerns from international health experts that a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus that appeared in Southeast Asia in late 2003 has the potential to trigger a human health pandemic.

The H5N1 virus now has been detected in wild birds or domestic poultry in more than 50 nations.

Human cases of the disease have appeared in 10 countries, causing 144 deaths. In most cases, individual exposure to the disease has been traced to direct contact with sick poultry.

Health authorities warn that if the H5N1 virus were to mutate to become contagious among humans, a global pandemic of human influenza could result, with severe effects on human health, social structures and economic activity.

With the support of IPAPI over the last year, Dobriansky said, more than 175 nations have national plans for combating avian and pandemic influenza.

Animal and human health authorities in only 40 nations had crafted such plans prior to the formation of IPAPI, according to the U.S. State Department’s Avian Influenza Action Group.

## CONTROLLING DISEASE

In collaboration with international organizations and through its own health and aid agencies, the United States is providing support and technical assistance to dozens of nations to better enable them to contain and control the disease in animal and human populations. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060717162906xmsknabue0.4441754> ).)

The U.S. departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Interior and others have deployed scientists, veterinarians, public health experts and emergency response teams to affected and high-risk countries to assist in dealing with actual outbreaks or to help develop plans for potential outbreaks.

U.S. assistance also is being used to help upgrade diagnostic and laboratory capabilities in vulnerable countries, and train animal and human health specialists who will be responsible for responding to outbreaks, according to a U.S. State Department September 20 fact sheet ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=texttrans-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060920133153xjsnommis5.720156e-02> ). (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/Archive/2006/Jun/23-838059.html> ).)

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has shipped about 93,000 personal protective equipment kits to 66 countries for use by responders in the field in 2006, according to the fact sheet.

That effort continues as USAID works to build a stockpile of 1.5 million personal protective equipment kits, 100 lab kits and 15,000 decontamination kits for deployment as necessary in the event of future avian influenza outbreaks.

For ongoing coverage of the disease and efforts to combat it, see Bird Flu (Avian Influenza) ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/bird\\_flu.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html) ).

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\*WPD317 09/20/2006

NASA Teams with Japan, United Kingdom and Europe to Study Sun  
(Solar-B spacecraft simultaneously will measure different layers of solar atmosphere) (510)

Washington -- To shed new light on the sun's magnetic field and how it affects life on Earth, NASA is preparing major instrument components for a September launch on the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Solar-B spacecraft.

Solar-B is a collaboration among the space agencies of Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe.

Solar-B's three instruments -- a solar optical telescope, an X-ray telescope and an extreme ultraviolet imaging spectrometer -- will perform coordinated measurements of different layers of the solar atmosphere, according to a September 18 NASA press release.

Continuous, simultaneous observations of specific solar features by all three instruments will allow Solar-B to observe how changes in the magnetic field at the sun's surface spread through the layers of the solar atmosphere.

"The information that Solar-B will provide is significant for understanding and forecasting of solar disturbances," said Solar-B project scientist John Davis, at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Alabama, "which can interfere with satellite communications, electric power transmission grids, and threaten the safety of astronauts traveling beyond the safety of the Earth's magnetic field."

JAXA is the lead agency for the Solar-B mission, supplying the spacecraft, the launch vehicle and space operations management.

NASA provided the focal plane package for the solar optical telescope, components for the solar X-ray telescope and the extreme ultraviolet imaging spectrometer, and engineering support for integrating the instruments.

The solar optical telescope will be the first space-borne instrument to measure the strength and direction of the sun's magnetic field in the sun's low atmosphere, also called the photosphere.

The X-ray telescope will capture the sun's outer atmosphere, the corona. The corona is the spawning ground for solar flares and coronal mass ejections.

Powered by the sun's magnetic field, this explosive solar activity produces significant effects in the space between the sun and Earth.

By combining observations from Solar-B's optical and X-ray telescopes, scientists will be able to study how changes in the sun's magnetic field trigger these powerful events.

The extreme ultraviolet imaging spectrometer will measure the speed of solar particles. The spectrometer provides a crucial link between the other two instruments, measuring layers that separate the photosphere from the corona -- an area called the chromosphere and the chromosphere-corona transition region. The spectrometer also will be able to measure the temperature and density of solar plasma -- the hot, ionized gas surrounding the sun.

After its launch from Uchinoura Space Center in Kagoshima, Japan, the Solar-B spacecraft will circle Earth in an orbit that puts the instruments in continuous sunlight for nine months each year.

NASA and the science teams will support instrument operations and data collection from the spacecraft operations center at JAXA's Institute of Space and Astronautical Science facility.

More information ( <http://www.nasa.gov/solar-b> ) about the Solar-B and full text ( [http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2006/sep/HQ\\_06316\\_solarb.html](http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2006/sep/HQ_06316_solarb.html) ) of the press release are available at the NASA Web site.

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\*WPD318 09/20/2006

International Scientists Discover New Ring at Saturn  
(Cassini also captured "pale blue dot" of Earth and faint image of moon) (660)

Washington – A newly discovered ring of Saturn was captured in an image taken by NASA's Cassini spacecraft September 17 during a one-of-a-kind observation.

Other spectacular sights photographed by Cassini's cameras include wispy fingers of icy material stretching tens of thousands of kilometers from the active moon, Enceladus, and a color image of planet Earth, according to a September 19 press release from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California.

The images were taken during the longest solar occultation of Cassini's four-year mission. During a solar occultation, the sun passes directly behind Saturn, and Cassini lies in the shadow of Saturn while the rings are brilliantly backlit. Usually, an occultation lasts only about an hour, but this time it was a 12-hour event.

The most recent occultation allowed Cassini to map the presence of microscopic particles that are not normally visible across the ring system. As a result, Cassini captured the entire inner Saturnian system in a new light.

The Cassini-Huygens mission is a cooperative project of NASA, the European Space Agency and Agenzia Spaziale Italiana, the Italian space agency.

## NEW SATURN RING

The new ring is a tenuous feature, visible outside the brighter main rings of Saturn and inside the G and E rings. It coincides with the orbits of Saturn's moons Janus and Epimetheus.

Scientists had expected that meteoroid impacts on Janus and Epimetheus might kick particles off the moons' surfaces and inject them into Saturn's orbit, but they were surprised that a well-defined ring structure exists at this location.

Saturn's extensive, diffuse E ring, the outermost ring, previously had been imaged one small section at a time. The 12-hour occultation let scientists see the entire structure in one view.

In the photographs, the moon Enceladus is seen sweeping through the E ring, extending wispy, fingerlike projections into the ring. These very likely consist of tiny ice particles being ejected from Enceladus' south polar geysers and entering the E ring.

"The new ring and the unexpected structures in the E ring should provide us with important insights into how moons can both release small particles and sculpt their local environments," said Matt Hedman, a research associate working with team member Joseph Burns, an expert in diffuse rings, at Cornell University in New York.

In the latest observations, scientists once again can see the bright ghost-like spokes -- transient, dusty, radial structures -- streaking across the middle of Saturn's main rings.

#### AN EYE TOWARD EARTH

Capping off the new batch of observations, Cassini cast its powerful lenses in Earth's direction and captured the pale blue orb and a faint suggestion of the moon.

Not since NASA's Voyager 1 spacecraft saw Earth as a pale blue dot from beyond the orbit of Neptune has Earth been imaged in color from the outer solar system.

"Nothing has greater power to alter our perspective of ourselves and our place in the cosmos than these images of Earth we collect from faraway places like Saturn," said Carolyn Porco, Cassini imaging team leader at the Space Science Institute in Colorado.

Porco was one of the Voyager imaging scientists involved in taking the "Pale Blue Dot" image.

"In the end," she said, "the ever-widening view of our own little planet against the immensity of space is perhaps the greatest legacy of all our interplanetary travels."

In the coming weeks, several science teams will analyze data collected by Cassini's other instruments during this rare occultation event. Those data will help scientists better understand the relationship between the rings and moons, and will give mission planners a clearer picture of ring hazards to avoid during future ring crossings.

Images of the new ring, the E ring ( <http://www.nasa.gov/cassini> ), Enceladus ( <http://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/> ) and Earth ( <http://ciclops.org/> ) are available on NASA Web sites.

The full text ( <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2006-110> ) of the press release is available on the JPL Web site.

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\*WPD319 09/20/2006

U.S. Oceans Agency Responds to International Oil Spills  
(Spills in Lebanon and Philippines put natural resources at risk) (490)

Washington -- The Office of Response and Restoration is working with the State Department and U.S. Coast Guard (USGC) to respond to recent oil spill emergencies in Lebanon and the Philippines.

The office is part of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), whose scientific support coordinators are at the forefront of emergency response efforts, providing scientific support and solutions to hazardous-material releases in the marine environment.

As the result of an Israeli missile attack on a power plant on the Mediterranean coast, at least 17.4 million liters of fuel oil were released into surrounding coastal waters less than 32 kilometers south of Beirut, Lebanon.

NOAA responded with spill-trajectory analyses, seasonal wind statistics, information on the behavior of submerged oil and general information on natural resources potentially at risk from the oil.

The information is helping the U.N. Environment Programme, the European oil-spill response community, the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Center for the Mediterranean Sea and local Lebanese officials develop a cleanup strategy, including how to address the oil's effects on the region.

In a separate accident in the Philippines, the vessel M/T Solar I spilled more than 378,000 liters of fuel [bunker] oil and sank in nearly 701 meters of water in the Panay Gulf, located off the west coast of the central Philippines near Nueva Valencia.

Another 1.7 million liters of fuel remain in the vessel, risking continued leaching into the Panay Gulf and potentially threatening marine life and affecting the coasts of the Panay and Iloilo islands, including sensitive mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reef habitats.

The State Department forwarded a request for assistance to the USCG, which deployed a small contingent from the Pacific Strike Force to evaluate cleanup potential and requirements for spill response. NOAA's scientific support coordinator for the Northwest and Pacific region joined the USCG strike team August 18 to help with the response.

The team conducted observation flights and shoreline surveys to identify oiling locations and develop response cleanup strategies for an area that is underdeveloped, with terrain that makes overground travel extremely difficult.

The U.S. team is working with the Philippine Coast Guard, and the Petron oil company and its contractors to improve response effectiveness and efficiency.

The rate of oil released from the vessel continues to decrease. NOAA is engaged in discussions to address shoreline cleanup and long-term remediation of oiled mangrove forest habitat.

The NOAA Office of Response and Restoration supports oil- and chemical-spill response operations with scientific recommendations to reduce environmental harm and economic cost of emergencies. The office responds to more than 100 coastal emergencies each year.

Additional information ( <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov/> ) about the Office of Response and Restoration and the full text ( <http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2006/s2701.htm> ) of the press release are available on the NOAA Web site.

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\*WPD320 09/20/2006

Text: U.S. Response to Potential Outbreak of Avian Influenza  
(United States pledged \$392 million to prepare for influenza threats) (1040)

(begin text)

U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Public Affairs  
September 18, 2006

FACT SHEET

United States International Engagement On Avian And Pandemic Influenza

The United States is working with countries in Asia, the Near East, Europe, Eurasia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and with key international organizations like the World Health Organization and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, to assist in preparedness for, surveillance of, and response to a potential outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza and the subsequent threat of a human influenza pandemic. The following are highlights of actions taken by the U.S. Government to address this challenge.

## PREPAREDNESS AND COMMUNICATION

- The United States is supporting avian influenza preparedness efforts in at least 53 countries in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and other international and in-country partners.
- U.S. Government agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture (USDA), Health and Human Services (HHS), Interior, and Defense, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), have deployed scientists, veterinarians, public-health experts, physicians, and emergency response teams to affected and high-risk countries to assist in the development and implementation of emergency preparedness plans and procedures for the response to avian and pandemic influenza.

The U.S. contribution of \$334 million was the largest cash pledge among bilateral donors at the Beijing donors' conference in January 2006, where the global community pledged \$1.9 billion to combat avian influenza worldwide. At the June meeting of the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza in Vienna, the U.S. increased its pledge by \$28 million. As of September 2006, our total contribution was further increased to \$392 million. Our contribution is being used for overseas programs to:

- Facilitate the development of national plans;
- Support development of diagnostics and laboratory capacity;
- Stockpile personal protective equipment and emergency health commodities;
- Conduct international communications campaigns and public outreach activities; and
- Train responders to animal and human outbreaks.

Of the \$392 million pledged by the United States, funds are going to a variety of activities to prevent and respond to avian and pandemic influenza threats, including the following:

- \$56 million is to be used to develop stockpiles of health supplies to contain human and animal outbreaks.
- Over \$36 million is dedicated to supporting avian and human influenza-related activities of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).
- \$41 million is planned for international research.
- The U.S. is collaborating with Canadian and Mexican counterparts on a comprehensive North American Pandemic Influenza Plan through the Security and Prosperity Partnership. This endeavor also utilizes other regional partnerships to strengthen preparedness.
- The U.S. is supporting communications and public awareness activities in at least 72 countries to generate awareness about avian influenza and to promote healthy behaviors and practices for the

reduction of risk for disease transmission through USAID and HHS. These messages are geared toward audiences ranging from the general public to high-risk groups, such as poultry farmers.

## SURVEILLANCE AND DETECTION

- The United States is supporting efforts to improve animal and human disease surveillance systems, capacity for laboratory diagnosis, and early-warning networks in more than 40 countries, and is working with its partners to expand on-the-ground surveillance capacity and improve knowledge about the movement and changes in H5N1 avian influenza on a global scale. This includes support for upgrading and improving national and regional laboratories as well as sample collection and shipping to ensure countries are able to quickly confirm the presence of the H5N1 virus.
- In 2004, the United States launched the Influenza Genome Sequencing Project. As of August 2006, genome sequences of more than 1,400 human influenza isolates have been made publicly available.
- Veterinarians and diagnosticians from affected and high-risk countries are being trained at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa to conduct accurate confirmatory tests on animal specimens. USDA also has deployed specialists and provided testing materials to priority countries to further strengthen diagnostic laboratory capacities for timely detection of HPAI in animal populations abroad.
- Representatives from the U.S., Canada and Mexico are coordinating surveillance efforts for the early detection of H5N1 in wild birds of North America through the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management.

## RESPONSE AND CONTAINMENT

- The U.S., with FAO and WHO, is training first responders to contain animal outbreaks and to mitigate the impact of animal outbreaks on human populations. The U.S. is also working to enhance the capacity of affected countries to manage response efforts.
- Since January 2006, USAID has deployed approximately 93,000 personal protective equipment (PPE) kits to 66 countries for use by responders in the field, including surveillance workers and outbreak-response teams. USAID is also building a stockpile of 1.5 million PPE kits, 100 lab kits, and 15,000 decontamination kits to critical countries around the world in anticipation of new avian influenza outbreaks.
- In addition, a stockpile of antiviral medications has been positioned in Asia for potential use in the region in response to a pandemic outbreak.
- In cooperation with WHO, U.S. experts have participated in investigations into human cases of AI in affected countries. The U.S. is also providing substantial technical assistance, in cooperation with the FAO and OIE, for influenza containment activities in 28 countries that have experienced animal outbreaks.
- The United States is providing expertise and funding to assist FAO to develop an FAO-OIE Crisis Management Center that will facilitate its ability to mount and coordinate an international rapid response to AI animal outbreaks worldwide, integrated with human surveillance efforts in conjunction with WHO. Through the FAO-OIE Center, USDA has deployed specialists on rapid-response missions to both Sudan and Ivory Coast. The U.S. Department of Defense is planning military-to-military training and exercises, and is assisting other countries in developing military preparedness and response plans.

(end text)

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\*WPD321 09/20/2006

MacArthur Grants Awarded to U.S.-based South Asians  
(Surgeon Atul Gawande, artist Shazia Sikander among recipients of "genius" award) (660)

By Lea Terhune  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – India-born surgeon Atul Gawande and Pakistani artist Shazia Sikander are among 25 people named by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to receive its 2006 "genius" award.

The honor includes a \$500,000 grant with no conditions attached. The announcement was made September 19 at the MacArthur Foundation headquarters in Chicago.

Gawande, 40, is a surgeon, author and assistant professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School and Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston. Sikander, 37, is a New York-based painter who blends South Asian art traditions with a broad range of contemporary media.

Gawande's stated goal is "to make a major contribution to knowledge, understanding and individual lives" through academic, clinical and public health work. He focuses particularly on reducing dangerous surgical errors. He introduced the use of bar codes on medical equipment to ensure sponges and surgical tools are not left inadvertently inside patients' bodies during surgery.

He is also a prolific writer. His 2002 collection of essays, *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*, highlights the human aspect of medicine from the doctor's perspective, compassionate patient care and the delicate balance needed to deliver that care effectively. Gawande, who has been a *New Yorker* magazine staff writer since 1998, writes frequently about the underprivileged. In "The Mop-Up" (2004) he wrote presciently about the difficulty of eradicating polio in rural India at a time when it was considered nearly eradicated.

"When the stakes are our lives and the lives of our children, we expect averageness to be resisted. And so I push to make myself the best," he wrote in "The Bell Curve" (2004).

Gawande holds degrees from Stanford University, Oxford University and Harvard Medical School. He writes a column for the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Sikander studied the fine tradition of Indian and Persian miniature painting at the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan. Fascinated with the precise, stylized technique, she took it in a new, contemporary direction. Born into a Muslim family, she uses elements from Hindu and Muslim iconography, representing what she calls "the entanglement of the histories of India and Pakistan." Not limiting herself to traditional painting, she creates complex installations using various media. "This artist's constant rethinking of media and visual sources makes her work a fluid, elaborately rendered commentary on diasporic experiences," according to the MacArthur Web site.

She often focuses on the role of women in society, depicting Hindu-style goddesses, Persian angels or veiled women confronting a complex reality. "I was interested in understanding feminism's different roles and brands across the globe, especially as it related to my experience in Pakistan," she said in an interview.

Sikander earned a master of fine arts degree at Rhode Island School of Design. Her work has been shown internationally and in the United States, including at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington.



The MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent institution that awards grants to groups and individuals around the world that “foster lasting improvement in the human condition.” Programs include global security and sustainability, human and community development and support of public interest media.

The MacArthur Fellowship program, limited to U.S. citizens or residents, identifies individuals “who show exceptional merit and promise of continued creative work.” Grantees are not necessarily well known, but they are extraordinarily talented in their fields -- usually in ways that benefit society. There is no application process for the grant. Rather, candidates are nominated by specially appointed “nominators.”

John D. MacArthur founded Bankers Life and Casualty and other businesses and his wife Catherine was director of the foundation. According to its Web site, the foundation has assets of \$5.5 billion and is one of the largest private philanthropic foundations in the United States.

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\*WPD322 09/20/2006

F. Murray Abraham, Oscar Winner, Seeks Tolerance Through Arts  
(American film and stage actor has roots in Syria, Italy) (910)

By Carolee Walker  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Actors can have a role in diplomacy, Oscar-winning actor F. Murray Abraham tells the Washington File. The physical presence of an actor, guided by a director, can spur viewers' imaginations, challenging them to live or think in a completely different way.

“The idea of putting yourself in someone else’s shoes is a good way to understand someone else,” he said. This works in film too, Abraham said, but even more so in live theater. “If they’re alive and onstage,” he said, actors enforce the audience’s identification with characters’ feelings of love and hate and stories about poverty, hunger and religious conflict.

At 67, Abraham, raised in El Paso, Texas, by Syrian and Italian parents, is committed as an actor and a director to allow the world to stand in his shoes, to see what he sees when he looks around: “the humanity of Americans.”

The changes in the attitudes toward Americans over the past five or six years at first were subtle, “but now there is just plain mistrust,” Abraham said. “People always seem surprised that I’m an American. They say, ‘you’re so nice, you’re so caring.’ I don’t know what they think we are, but the impression they have of us is that we’re insensitive.”

When Abraham travels abroad, especially with film crews or while performing in live theater, he is grateful when locals “meet as many of us as they can, because it is a great way for people to find out that there are a lot of good people in this country.”

They are surprised that Abraham cares as much about the same things they care about.

“Both of my brothers are buried in a military cemetery in Texas,” Abraham said, “and my wife’s only brother was taken while in the service. I am very interested in doing anything I can to promote America and its humanity.

“It has been years since I thought about how my parents suffered these losses. I pray for peace.”

Abraham has appeared in nearly 60 films and 90 plays. He won an Academy Award for Best Actor for the 1984 film *Amadeus*. On Broadway, Abraham's credits include *Angels in America*, *A Month in the Country* and *Triumph of Love*. In July 2004, Abraham was awarded the "Premio per gli Italiani nel Mondo" by the Marzio Tremaglia Foundation and the Italian government. The honor acknowledges Italian emigrants and their descendants who have distinguished themselves abroad. Abraham is proud of his heritage as an Assyrian and as an Italian, but Abraham is above all an American.

Whether on stage or in film, Abraham strives in his work to show audiences the values of tolerance, humanity and peace.

In September, Abraham traveled to Moscow to make the film *Perestroika*. Set in Soviet Russia during the 1950s to 1980s, *Perestroika* "is about freedom and human rights," Abraham said. He plays the mentor of a brilliant Jewish astrophysicist who wants to emigrate. The film is written and directed by Russian émigré Slava Tsukerman.

Although Abraham is best known for his Oscar-winning performance as the Italian composer and Mozart's rival Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) in *Amadeus*, European audiences also remember Abraham in *The Name of the Rose* (1986), a thriller set in a medieval-era Benedictine Abbey.

"Maybe Europeans are closer in their roots to the medieval period," Abraham surmised. But audiences of all cultural backgrounds share the desire to live another person's story for a few hours, he said. Fulfilling that desire by transporting audiences to another time and place is the responsibility of actors and directors.

Abraham takes that responsibility seriously. In the past few years he has sought projects that enable actors to spread the message of peace. In 2003, Abraham guest-starred in a reading of Paul D'Andrea's adaptation of *Nathan the Wise* by German playwright Gotthold Lessing in collaboration with Theater of the First Amendment at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

Abraham said 18th century European audiences panned Lessing's tale of religious tolerance in 12th century Jerusalem, but 21st century audiences warmly received the new version, which features a Jewish merchant, a Muslim leader and a Christian soldier in present-day Virginia.

"Based in fact, the story was the gathering together of three great religions, and through a series of amazing coincidences and circumstances that the characters believed were guided by the hand of God, they were able to exist side by side," Abraham said.

Abraham's current projects further his goal of spreading tolerance and understanding. He will reprise the roles of Shylock in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* and Barabas in Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. The plays will be presented at the Duke Theater in New York City in January 2007 and February 2007, and in summer 2007 at the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre at Stratford-Upon-Avon in England.

"The Merchant of Venice examines people's intolerance of each other," Abraham said. "The Christians don't come off any better than Shylock [a Jew] does. And the idea that you can try to use your religion as a cudgel against someone else or to separate yourself by your religion is something that we try to examine in our production."

"It's going to raise some hackles, but it's an important piece," said Abraham.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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\*WPD323 09/20/2006

Analyst Sees Improvements Coming in U.N. Operations  
(Accomplishments and future challenges subject of online discussion) (740)

By Carolee Walker  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United Nations faces an inordinate number and range of difficult challenges, but as long as the United States poses tough questions for the world body, chances are good that improvements in its functioning lie ahead, said Edward Luck, an international relations expert, who hosted a State Department-sponsored September 20 webchat on the accomplishments and challenges of the United Nations.

The U.N. General Assembly 61st session convened September 19. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060919172317ndyblehs0.3794519> ).)

"Now in its 61st year and busier than ever," Luck said, "the U.N. has made important contributions to the establishment and dissemination of international norms in areas as diverse as human rights, humanitarian affairs, disarmament, the environment and development."

Luck is director of the Center on International Organization at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York City.

Although the United Nations has proven resistant to formal structural reforms, it has adapted to changing conditions and demands, according to Luck. The most pressing issues facing the United Nations in the current session are handling the large number of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions around the world, defeating terrorism and armed militias, identifying the U.N.'s role in eliminating poverty and implementing a more balanced approach to human rights violations, he said.

When the parties to a conflict seek to resolve their differences, Luck said, the United Nations helps broker settlements and provides peacekeepers to buy time for diplomacy and political reconciliation to work. Yet, rarely is it in a position to compel the implementation of its decisions and resolutions, leaving this to member states, he said.

Although recent U.N. reforms are encouraging, Luck said, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission are off to inauspicious starts. The Peacebuilding Commission, for example, has been concerned mostly with its internal organization so far, he said. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906174917bcreklaw0.4854853> ).)

Luck said previous U.N. sessions contributed significantly to resolving conflicts in such places as Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Angola, El Salvador, Namibia and the Balkans. Poverty rates and child mortality are down significantly in most of the world, according to Luck, because economic growth has been higher in developing than developed countries throughout the past half-century. Human rights standards and expectations have risen in much of the world since the end of the Cold War, he said.

It would be misleading to ignore the progress that has been made, Luck said, but problems remain. "Strife is rife in the Middle East and parts of Africa, terrorism has exacerbated insecurity in much of the world and pockets of extreme poverty remain in far too many places," he said.

Abuses committed by U.N. peacekeepers are unacceptable, Luck said, and although the United Nations has clarified rules and standards for participating in U.N. operations, troop-contributing countries have not always enforced these effectively and U.N. oversight could be strengthened. "The problem of holding voluntary forces fully accountable has been compounded by the U.N.'s desperate need for countries to provide these forces at a time when the organization is so overstretched," Luck said.

"There appears to be so much demand for peacekeeping that this needs to be shared between the U.N. and various regional and sub-regional organizations," Luck said, "including not only NATO, but the African Union and other groups."

In terms of disaster relief, the United Nations has begun to recognize the important social, as well as economic, role of the private sector, Luck said. The question is how to build effective partnerships between public and private enterprises, including the nonprofit or independent sector. "The U.N. did relatively well in responding to the tsunami last year, in that someone needed to play a global coordinating and advocacy role. There were affected places where direct bilateral U.S. assistance might have been less welcome without the political cover provided by the world body," he said.

A frequent media commentator in the United States, Luck has published and testified before Congress on arms control, defense and foreign policy, Russian and East Asian affairs, as well as on United Nations reform and peacekeeping. He is the author of a special Washington File article "A Dynamic Balance Sheet on the United Nations at 60 ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=September&x=20050907104308dmslahrellek0.2560236&t=xarchives/xarchitem.html> )."

For more information, see The United States and the United Nations ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/UNGA\\_2005.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html) ).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)  
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\*WPD324 09/20/2006

Transcript: Scholar Discusses U.N. Accomplishments, Future Challenges  
(USINFO Webchat transcript, September 20) (2580)

Edward C. Luck, professor of practice in international and public affairs and director of the Center on International Organization of the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York City, responds to questions in a September 20 USINFO Webchat on U.N. reform.

Following is the transcript:

(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Bureau of International Information Programs  
USINFO Webchat Transcript

Guest: Edward Luck  
Date: September 20, 2006  
Time: 10:00 a.m. EDT (1400 GMT)

The United Nations Accomplishments and Future Challenges

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: Welcome to USINFO webchats. Our webchat with Dr. Luck will start in just a few minutes at 1400 GMT. You can start sending in questions now. Thank you.

EDWARD LUCK: The UN is now in its 61st year and busier than ever. So clearly the 192 Member States still see it as a place where they can conduct much of the business of world affairs. The UN system includes dozens of agencies that have left their mark in functional and humanitarian affairs. Its track record in terms of specific accomplishments, however, has been decidedly uneven, varying by subject, time, and place. The UN has made important contributions to the establishment and dissemination of

international norms in areas as diverse as human rights, humanitarian affairs, disarmament, environment, and development.

Much of the process of implementation has been left to others, however, as the UN's operational capacities on the ground are generally quite modest. When the parties to a conflict are seeking to resolve their differences, the UN can help broker settlements and provide peacekeepers to buy time for diplomacy and political reconciliation to work.

Yet rarely is it in a position to compel the implementation of its decisions and resolutions, leaving this to its Member States in many cases. What global political body has ever accomplished as much?

QUESTION [abhilasha]: What do you think has been biggest achievement of UN post cold war? Most of African countries' economy is poor, U.S. without UN support has waged war, N. Korea has made clear its nuclear program, human rights is still a big issue ... do you think amidst these plural problems in front of UN, UN has any importance? The 'power to influence' of UN has decreased considerably ... how in your opinion can UN's glory be revived?

ANSWER [Edward Luck]: I'm not sure that the UN ever had a lot of glory to revive, but you are certainly right in suggesting that expectations were quite high--indeed, unreasonably so -- at the outset. Yes, there are many problems without short-term solutions and the UN hardly qualifies as a miracle worker. But the level of both inter-state and intra-state conflict has fallen since the end of the Cold War, with decreasing numbers of casualties and refugees.

The UN can't claim sole credit, of course, but it contributed significantly to resolving conflicts in places like Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Angola, El Salvador, Namibia, and the Balkans. Poverty rates and child mortality are down significantly in most of the world, as economic growth has been higher in developing than developed countries throughout the past half-century. Human rights standards and expectations have risen in much of the world since the end of the Cold War. Again, the UN has been only one of many actors and many factors bearing on these accomplishments, but it would be just as misleading to ignore the progress that has been made as to pretend that all is well. Strife is rife in the Middle East and parts of Africa, terrorism has exacerbated insecurity in much of the world, and pockets of extreme poverty remain in far too many places.

The UN's work, I would suspect, may never be done. To me, however, the fact that it is still trying is encouraging.

Q [valda]: From the many plans for reforming the United Nations, which one do you consider the most urgent?

How would you estimate the chances of the President of Latvia Vike-Freiberga to become the next UN secretary general?

A: First Question: Your reform question suggests, correctly, that there has been an effort to do too many reforms at once, with too little sense of what is most urgent and feasible. I'd start with management reforms, especially those relating to human resources, transparency, accountability, and giving the Deputy Secretary-General a well-defined job description and line authority. Two of the recent reforms steps are already in some trouble. The Human Rights Council is off to a decidedly inauspicious start, preoccupied with one country, Israel, when it has hardly been the only transgressor of human rights. The Peace building Commission has been concerned mostly with its internal organization so far. The Security Council has been opening up its working methods and this should be encouraged, though I would not rush to enlarge it since there is nothing close to a consensus on how and whether this should be done.

Second Question: I hear that she is articulate and outspoken, but her chances are slim. Right gender, but wrong continent. We've already had three Secretaries-General from Europe and it will be some time, in all likelihood, before we have a fourth. Besides, the Russians, who have a veto over the Council's nomination, are unenthusiastic about any candidate from the Baltic Republics.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: The State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs maintains a special webpage where you can find out more about this year's UN General Assembly and U.S.-UN issues ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/UNGA\\_2005.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html) ).

Q [Marek]: On the topic of peacekeeping. The UN does or does not have clear rules on conduct of its peacekeeper forces? There have been some very ugly cases of abuse by UN "blue helmets". How do you respond to this?

A: Question Three: You are certainly right, that the abuses committed by UN forces in recent years have been totally unacceptable. While they may be the exception, not the rule, we have to find better ways of preventing such abuses in the future. They have clarified rules and standards for participation in the UN operations, but the troop-contributing countries have not always enforced these effectively and UN oversight could be strengthened.

The problem of holding voluntary forces fully accountable has been compounded by the UN's desperate need for countries to provide these forces at a time when the organization is so overstretched. More joint training, dissemination of UN manuals and rules, and the development of multinational training centers for an international officer corps might help.

The UN could also follow-up more closely on whether troop-contributing states have carried out promised prosecutions and punishments of accused violators of basic human rights standards. If the country in question has failed to follow-up, then they it should be excluded from any standby list until the problems are rectified.

Q [Marek]: What are the biggest future challenges the U.N faces?

A: Question One: The UN always seems to face an inordinate number and range of difficult challenges. My order would be: 1) handling the burgeoning number of peacekeeping and peace building missions with a reasonable degree of success; 2) defeating terrorism, armed militias, and another challenges to the inter-state system; 3) identifying more than a hortatory role for the UN in development and poverty elimination; 4) implementing a more balanced approach to human rights violations around the world; 5) accomplishing the management reforms mentioned above, and 6) finally learning how to make choices and set priorities.

Q [Marek]: NATO is getting into the business of peacekeeping operations. Do you see this as a threat to the UN's role as world policeman? And why does it take so long for the UN to assemble peacekeeper forces?

A: Question Two: To me, there appears to be so much demand for peacekeeping that this needs to be shared between the UN and various regional and sub-regional organizations, including not only NATO, but the African Union and other groups. This delegation of authority can raise problems of accountability when things go wrong and the Security Council rarely exercises effective oversight over such delegated operations. Also, in recent years UN blue helmets have come largely from the developing world, while NATO countries prefer to have their forces serve outside of a UN command structure. Over time, such segregation could raise troubling political problems.

Q [Regina]: What are the problems with the Commission on Human Rights that pushed creation of a new CHR?

A: The Commission on Human Rights had, after many years of poor performance, lost any credibility as an effective force for advancing agreed international human rights standards. Its membership included many of the worst violators of human rights, who flocked to the Commission to avoid any censure there. At 53 members, it was too large to be an effective deliberative body and its sessions tended to be highly politicized and very divisive. It tended to be one-sided, with much of its attention focused on a small number of politically unpopular countries, while latent violations by others were ignored. Secretary-

General Kofi Annan was particularly scathing in his criticisms of the Commission, since he had made human rights a centerpiece of his term in office.

The new Human Rights Council was to correct some of these problems by requiring a higher hurdle for election to membership on the Council, by having a universal periodic review of the human rights performance of all Member States, beginning with the members of the Council, and by being slightly smaller. The composition of the Council shows a slightly larger proportion of democratic states than had the Commission, but a number of states with questionable human rights records were elected by the General Assembly to the Council nevertheless.

So far, as I noted above, the Council has been no more balanced in its performance perhaps even less so than the Commission had been. Hopefully now that it is to begin its second session some of these problems can be addressed. It has the potential advantage of meeting more frequently during the year, permitting it to respond more rapidly to unfolding calamities.

Moreover, we have yet to see whether the universal periodic review will prove to be an effective mechanism for encouraging a more balanced and global consideration of human rights performance around the world.

WEBCCHAT MODERATOR: For more on this issue, read the State Department's Washington File article, "New Human Rights Council Sessions Disappointing, Says State Official ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060906174917bcrekaw0.4854853> )".

Q [Kuba]: Thinking about future challenges, you mentioned "What global political body has ever accomplished as much?" How about the role of the global business community? Do you think that private sector may one day come to have more ability to influence world events AND respond to crisis?

In the U.S. there was criticism that private firms did better in response to Katrina ... why not the same for world problems?

A: You raise an interesting point. My sense is that this is not an either/or question. The UN, rather belatedly, has begun to recognize the important social, as well as economic, role of the private sector. The core advantage of the private sector, of course, is the fact that it is independent of governments and inter-governmental agencies. That raises a disadvantage in terms of accountability. Katrina did not show either the federal, state, or local governments at their best in the US. But neither would the public have wanted to entrust relief and rebuilding entirely to the private sector, with its profit motives. The question is how to build effective partnerships or collaborative relationships between public and private enterprises, including, of course, the non-profit or independent sector.

In terms of disaster relief, my impression is that the UN did relatively well in responding to the tsunami last year, in that someone needed to play a global coordinating and advocacy role. There were affected places where direct bilateral US assistance might have been less welcome without the political cover provided by the world body. In any case, you have raised an area that needs a good deal more research, analysis, and creative thinking.

WEBCCHAT MODERATOR: Read "Going the Distance: The U.S. Tsunami Relief Effort 2005 ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/tsunami/> )," an online publication of the U.S. State Department.

Q [TAK]: What aspects of the United Nations, if any, do you think need to be reformed. For example, are there certain organs that you think are too stove piped, over funded/resourced, under funded/resourced, lack sufficient accountability, transparency, or decision-making authority?

A: Where to begin? In terms of inter-governmental organs, it is ironic that so much public and official attention has been focused on the Security Council, which has been so active and relatively effective in recent years. ECOSOC and the General Assembly have been much more marginal performers, so much

so that reformers have pretty much abandoned serious study about how they can be made more relevant and focused. Everyone has their favorite and least favorite agencies in the UN system, but on the whole they tend to be more accountable because most have their own governing boards and must seek voluntary funding. Most importantly, they usually have relatively well-defined missions and often-operational roles that invite assessment by stakeholders on the ground.

As I noted in an earlier response, my feeling is that the development agencies, on the whole, have found it difficult to define their areas of comparative advantage with any precision or permanence, given that forces well beyond the UN's control tend to determine economic performance. UNDP, for example, has reinvented itself a number of times over the years. It has identified some valuable niche roles for itself, such as the production of the various human development reports, which have spurred innovative thinking in many parts of the world. In the central UN secretariat, the production of statistics and demographic information has been world class, while the secretariats serving the inter-governmental bodies have tended to languish in terms of innovative thinking, reflecting the inter-governmental bodies they serve. After 35 years of observing the UN, I continue to be struck by the disparity between the best in the secretariat, who are truly world class and highly dedicated, and the number of their colleagues who have either lost the spark or lacked it to begin with.

I'm not sure that that suggests a trimming of posts and offices, rather it suggests the need for major renovation of human resource policies and practices, something the Secretary-General proposed doing this Spring but was rebuffed by the Fifth Committee and General

I regret that there has not been time to respond to one or two of these valuable questions. However, we can be sure that, as long as we are posing tough questions for the world body, the chances are good that further improvements in its functioning lie ahead. While the UN has proven resistant to formal structural reforms, it has been remarkably adaptable to changing conditions and demands. No doubt this is what one should expect of such a highly political body.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: We would like to thank all of our participants and Dr. Luck for joining us today. The Webchat is now closed. A transcript of today's Webchat will be available on our USINFO Webchat Station ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html> ) within one business day.

(While guests are chosen for their expertise, the views expressed by the guests are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.)

(end transcript)

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)  
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\*WPD325 09/20/2006

Transcript: Professor Ostrower Discusses the Impact of United Nations  
(USINFO Webchat transcript, September 19) (2320)

Gary B. Ostrower, professor of history at Alfred University in Alfred, New York. He served as president of the Society for Study of Internationalism, an organization that promoted and publicized academic study in the field of international cooperation.

Following is the transcript:

(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Bureau of International Information Programs



## USINFO Webchat Transcript

### Origins of the United Nations

Guest: Gary Ostrower  
Date: September 19, 2006  
Time: 9:00 a.m. EDT (1300 GMT)

The origins of the United Nations are the subject of a USINFO webchat. As the 61st U.N. General Assembly gets underway, please join Gary Ostrower for the first of three webchats on the United Nations, and organization which last year marked its 60th anniversary and looks to future reforms. Gary Ostrower is the author of a special Washington File article "Founding of the United Nations: A Profound Cause of Thanksgiving," which was released in 2005.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: Welcome to USINFO Webchats. Our webchat on Origins of the United Nations will begin in just a few minutes.

We see your questions coming in, please send each question separately.

GARY OSTROWER: Good morning, at least it is morning here in Alfred, NY.

The UN emerged out of the wreckage of World War II, but it also owed its existence to the efforts of the Wilsonians who had created the League of Nations a quarter century earlier. Because the League had failed to prevent the "next" war, even its defenders viewed it with embarrassment. Nevertheless, the UN was unquestionably a child of the League, and we cannot understand the UN's origins without understanding its 1919 ancestry.

QUESTION [Josip]: What was the difference in the success of the UN vs the failed League of Nations?

A: This is a tough question to answer. Most people believe that the League failed, and it did fail if failure means the ability to prevent a general war like World War II. But the League actually had many small successes, especially in the health and economic fields. These success received little publicity, but broadened our understanding of what the League could do.

The UN, on the other hand, has also "failed" to do what it was mainly intended to do--to prevent war, or to punish aggression when war has broken out. Except for sending troops to Korea in 1950 and, in a more murky way, to Iraq in 1991, the veto of the big powers has kept the UN from achieving its goals. Nevertheless, the UN has hugely expanded its range of activities into area ranging from economic development to environmental protection, and some of the things have proved very successful. The range of such activity has been much greater than that of the League, and for this reason we tend to think of the UN as a more capable organization.

Q [Josip]: Can you envision a successor organization?

A: I can not only imagine a successor organization, I'm sure there would be one if the UN disappears. It's a situation where we can safely say that if a UN-type organization did not exist, we'd have to invent it. However, in spite of a great deal of cynicism about the UN and the hope (by some of its critics) that it would disappear, the UN isn't going away. It may change, but it will not go the way of the League of Nations.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: Dr. Ostrower contributed to the Department of State's three-part series of articles covering the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the U.N. You can read his article "Founding of the United Nations: "A Profound Cause of Thanksgiving ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2005/Sep/06-534246.html> )."

Q [Marek]: How did the countries of the Soviet sphere react to the creation of the UN? Were they truly free members or was their activity controlled by USSR? Were there any independent thinking socialist member states that voted against USSR in the council?

A: The countries of Eastern Europe in 1945 had very little real independence, and they therefore largely toed the Soviet line. They were almost completely passive at the San Francisco Conference where the UN Charter was drafted, and they voted in line with Moscow. Although Czechoslovakia still had a degree of independence, as did Yugoslavia, neither country said much about the founding of the UN.

Did any members of the Soviet bloc vote against the wishes of the USSR? For the most part, the answer is no. In fact, two members of the Soviet bloc, Byelorussia and the Ukraine, were actually members of the USSR. They were given seats at the UN because the Soviets complained that members of the British Commonwealth effectively gave Britain multiple seats. Likewise the Soviets complained about U.S. "client" states in Latin America padding the U.S. vote. FDR in 1945 even considered asking for three U.S. seats to compensate for the three Soviet seats at the UN, but he eventually backed away from the idea for fear that it would be ridiculed at home.

Q [Regina]: The UN was created in a post-WWII environment. So it reflects that world today. What do you think about proposed changes to the UN to make it more up to date...the Security Council for example?

A: Good question. The UN is, in some ways, very much the creature of an earlier era. However, it is proving hugely difficult to reform the organization. Some observers have suggested that the Security Council include a single European member state, rather than one from France and another from the UK. Excellent idea, I think, but neither the British nor the French would agree. And since reform would need the concurrence of both states, change is unlikely. There have been many proposals to get around this problem, such as appointing semi-permanent members of the SC or expanding the size of the Council (this has already happened), but none of these so-called solutions is entirely satisfactory and none are likely to gain the support of states that would lose their privileged position.

Other reforms are more possible. The Trusteeship Council really suspended operations in 1994 when its reason for existence (supervision of former colonies) went out of existence). But other UN agencies, such as the Military Staff Committee which is as useful to the UN as our appendix is useful to our bodies, continue to meet to this day. Its members meet, shake hands, then adjourn. And they've been going through this ritual for 59 years.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: Today's webchat is part of the Department of State's series to mark the 61st UN General Assembly. Our series began with Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristen Silverberg ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/silverberg\\_13\\_sept\\_2006.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/silverberg_13_sept_2006.html) ) in a webchat preview of the current session.

Q [Kuba]: According to your article, "the greatest public campaign concerning any foreign policy issue in U.S. history" was the one to push the UN through the US senate. For those senators who objected to the UN, what was the main argument? Was Roosevelt/Truman fully engaged in the process of persuading senators? And how would you compare their ability to influence senators with that of LBJ who was famous for his ability to influence senators?

A: The senators who objected to the UN were very few, in contrast to opposition to the League of Nations in 1919 where many more voted in opposition. Of the few who did object to the UN, all were confirmed isolationists. They believed that membership in the UN might (would) involve the US in foreign wars, and that the U.S. Constitution forbade membership (because the Constitution made a declaration of war the responsibility of the Congress, not an international body). I don't want to get into a complicated explanation of why this view of the Constitution was inaccurate, but suffice to say that the remaining isolations had very little support in 1945. I ought to add that the campaign for the UN was huge. It was a response to the failure of the Senate to ratify the League of Nations Covenant back in 1919.

Q [Kuba]: Can you tell us who you think is/are the best secretary generals and why?

A: In my estimation, the best Secretary General was Dag Hammarskjold who served from 1953 until his death in a plane crash in 1961. The first Secretary General, Trygve Lie from Norway, was an earnest man who never fully understood the need to carve out an independent position for himself. Consequently, he incurred the wrath of both the Soviets and the Americans, rendering him largely ineffective by the time he stepped down.

Hammarskjold was his mirror opposite. Dag Hammarskjold greatly expanded the scope of his office, taking diplomatic initiatives that we remember today. He personally secured the release of American airmen from Chinese prisons after the Korean War, and he contributed to the creation of the first genuine UN peace-keeping forces following the Suez Crisis of 1956.

And he was tough. When the Soviets attacked him in 1960 over his role in trying to settle a crisis in the former Belgian Congo, Hammarskjold stood his ground, rejecting the Soviet plan to appoint three SG's instead of one (called a troika), and proclaiming his own loyalty to the UN ideal. At the end of one speech where he defended his office, he received the longest ovation ever received by a UN official.

Q [Regina]: Were any other cities considered for the main offices of the UN? And what type of sovereignty does the UN have while it sits on US soil?

A: The only other city seriously considered was Geneva, the home of the discredited League of Nations. And because the League had been discredited, few observers from countries other than Switzerland felt strongly about the Geneva site. New York had much going for it. Because so many non-American officials believed that the UN would go the way of the League without American membership, virtually none of them were willing to challenge Washington's support for the New York site. Moreover, the devastation of some European cities and the economic dislocation in others (such as Paris) made New York the logical home.

There was a bit of support for San Francisco. That city was more conveniently located for delegations from the Asia and the Pacific. However, a SF campaign never got off the ground.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: Our next webchat in our series on the UN will take place tomorrow, September 20 at 1400 GMT. Our guest, Dr. Edward Luck, will cover the "The United Nations: Accomplishments and Future Challenges ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/luck\\_20\\_sep\\_2006.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/USINFO/Products/Webchats/luck_20_sep_2006.html) )."

Q [Marek]: I do think there are many criticisms of the UN and many of them are justified. But much of the work is not seen. Food aid, disease prevention, UNICEF.

Were these functions added later or were they part of the original plan of the UN mission?

A: Some were original functions of the UN, most were added later. But one point needs to be stressed. One of the most important differences between the old League and the new UN was that the League came to its economic and social functions by accident (I am exaggerating, but they were given little thought in 1919). When the UN was created, the Economic and Social Council was made an integral part of the organization. That gave the economic and social activity a kind of standing--a higher status--that it ever had during the League's lifetime. Today, I believe that the most important work of the UN is in these fields; it is not in the political field where the SC veto still hobbles the organization.

I'd add that today we can legitimately talk about a UN System, which reflects the very varied functions of the UN. Just google the term United Nations System, or go to the UN webpage (UN.org) and type in those words. You will find over a hundred agencies, plus committees and peacekeeping operations that reflect this expanded role. Most have appeared in the years after 1945. In other words, they were only dimly envisioned by the men who attended the 1945 San Francisco conference.

Q [Marek]: Thank you for your answer.

I am curious, in those days of the cold war, what was the dialogue like among the nations in the UNGA?

We know how Premier Khrushchev was handling the discussion....by hitting his shoe on the podium.

A: Some of the dialogue was dull as that proverbial dishwater. Occasionally, the UN experienced dramatic debates, as when Khrushchev famously banged his shoe in 1959 or 1960. But the reality is that because the Security Council veto rendered the enforcement provisions (the provisions that would allow the UN to enforce the peace) quite meaningless, there were few spirited debates. There were a few-- when the Israelis and Egyptians fought in 1967, when the General Assembly voted to expel Nationalist China and replace it with the PRC (leading to a demonstration that the American representative denounced as carnival-like--but most debates were pretty tame and even arcane.

GARY OSTROWER: Thank you for your questions. If any of you are interested, you can follow up some of my comments by taking a look of my book about the UN (called "The United Nations and the United States"), or by buying a superb new book by Paul Kennedy called "The Parliament of Man." Lots of good literature out there. My best wishes to you.

WEBCHAT MODERATOR: We would like to thank all of our participants and Dr. Ostrower for taking the time to Webchat with us today. The Webchat is now closed.

A transcript of today's Webchat will be available on our USINFO Webchat Station ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/usinfo/Products/Webchats.html> ) with one business day.

(While guests are chosen for their expertise, the views expressed by the guests are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.)

(end transcript)

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\*WPD326 09/20/2006

Transcript: State Department Deputy Spokesman's Daily Briefing  
(Thailand, Turkey, Israel/Palestinians, Iraq, Venezuela, Sudan, Hungary, North Korea, Japan, Cyprus, Iran) (4900)

(begin transcript)

U.S. Department of State  
Daily Press Briefing Index  
Wednesday, September 20, 2006  
12:50 p.m. EDT

Briefer: Tom Casey, Deputy Spokesman

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- US Calls for Restoration of Democratic Rule in Thailand
- Status of US Aid to Thailand
- US Contacts with Thai Government/Coup Leadership
- Whereabouts of Thai Prime Minister

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## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

### DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

12:50 p.m. EDT

MR. CASEY: Good afternoon, everybody. Don't have any opening statements for you, so Barry, why don't we go right into questions.

QUESTION: All right. Thailand, absent from the two statements the State Department put out yesterday, any comments on whether you approve of a coup or, for instance, whether you think the overthrown government was corrupt? There's no value -- there are no value judgments -- just, you know, hope things are sorted out in a democratic way. Were they justified in overthrowing the government and do you think the rule -- the military rule will be as temporary as they say it will be?

MR. CASEY: Well, Barry, first of all, there is no justification for a military coup in Thailand or in any place else. And we certainly are extremely disappointed by this action. It is a step backward for democracy in Thailand. And I think it is important that that step backward now be resolved in accordance with the rule

of law and democracy. We very much urge that democratic elections be held as soon as possible, which is a commitment military officials have made. That commitment needs to be met and it needs to be respected. And in that process, we need to make sure that there is full respect for freedom of speech and assembly and that violence be avoided.

There are also consequences when these kinds of actions take place and obviously in light of what's happened, in light of this coup, there are aspects of our relationship that we are going to have to review. There are certain legal and other requirements out there. I certainly don't want to get ahead of any evaluations that are currently being made. But again it is something we're going to have to look at. But certainly, I would characterize this as a coup and certainly under no circumstances should a military coup ever be deemed acceptable.

QUESTION: Could you at least give us the categories of the relationship that would be under review?

MR. CASEY: Well, I think first and foremost, there are sections of the Foreign Operations Act concerning assistance that are considered. I think the specific citation for you, Barry, would be Section 508 of the Foreign Operations Act of '06. I believe there are some other ones potentially out there. That's the one that usually comes into play when a situation like this happens. But again, I think the most important thing is that we want to see a resolution of this situation in accordance with the rule of law, in accordance with democratic procedures and that certainly means a restoration of civilian rule in Thailand as quickly as possible.

QUESTION: You described it as a step backwards. Wouldn't the appropriate step be not the restoration of civilian rule, but the restoration of the Thaksin government?

MR. CASEY: Well, again, I'm not going -- I'm trying to make sure that we lay out the basic positions here. There is still a lot that's happening on the ground in Thailand, but the main thing is that there needs to be democratic rule there. The military individuals who are now running the country have stated that their objective is to have elections, is to have a return to civilian democratic rule, and to do so in very quick order, and that's what we want to see happen.

QUESTION: Do you have any figure for assistance?

QUESTION: Can I follow up on this and then we get to the assistance?

MR. CASEY: Why don't we -- Arshad, why don't you follow up and then we'll go on to the assistance.

QUESTION: The thing that perplexes me is that if no military coup is justified and if, you know, ousting elected governments is something the United States Government does not approve, why you would simply lay out your desire for a restoration of civilian rule rather than Thaksin, who was -- who won an election, should be restored. Why isn't that your preferred outcome?

MR. CASEY: Look, at this point I'm not offering any specific prescriptions on this. These are issues for the Thai people to determine. What is important is that the coup leaders live up to their public commitment to restore democracy rapidly.

QUESTION: Can I follow up on --

MR. CASEY: Well, let's go to Barry first.

QUESTION: I just wondered if you had any assistance figure.

MR. CASEY: You know I don't have specific figures on foreign assistance.

QUESTION: Do you have -- if you don't have specific figures, do you have categories, what kind of aid do we give the Thais?

MR. CASEY: No, I honestly don't, Charlie. I haven't done a review of what's out there. Certainly there are a number of different categories. I'm sure we can come up with a listing for you of the amounts of aid involved and wherever. Thailand is, of course, a country that has made a great deal of progress in building and strengthening democracy over the past decades. It's had, though -- it certainly has had its ups and downs. It is a growing economy and it is an important economy. So I don't believe it is a major recipient of U.S. assistance, but certainly we can look for you at the various categories of aid that are out there.

QUESTION: And just to go back a step, I am perplexed as well, similarly to Arshad. I don't understand why the government that's been overthrown shouldn't be restored or why you're reluctant to call for that. And it seems -- it doesn't seem to add up that you, you know, promote democracy and rule of law and then a government is overthrown and not to take the step to call for the restoration of that government.

MR. CASEY: Well, look again, Charlie, I think the facts on the ground are that a coup has happened. Certainly we wish that that had not occurred in the first place. But the important thing now is that we move forward to make sure that those who have engaged in this activity live up to their public commitments. And again, those public commitments are to restore democracy as quickly as possible. The determinations and the specifics of that are things that we need to let the Thai people work out and resolve, and I am simply not in a position to do that for them. This is an issue that they are going to need to work out.

Mr. Lambros, same issue?

QUESTION: Yes. Any communication with the King, who in this day is acting as (inaudible) cooperating with a military (inaudible) democracy in Thailand?

MR. CASEY: Well, I don't have any information on the King's role specifically. Certainly, what we are doing is talking to all different political actors in Thailand. Again, what we're doing is encouraging everyone to have, first, the coup leaders act out on their commitments and restore democratic rule as quickly as possible. And again, with everyone in the political process, we are also encouraging everyone to do so in a way that is respectful of the rule of law, that carries out things in a manner that is nonviolent, and that leads to a quick and peaceful resolution of this issue.

QUESTION: A follow-up. What is the status of the Prime Minister of Thailand who is in New York on American soil?

MR. CASEY: I am not sure where he is right now. I have seen press reports indicating that he is in or perhaps is en route to London, but I don't have any information about where he is right now.

QUESTION: Can you tell us about any contacts the U.S. may have had with either the Thai Government or the Prime Minister's government or the coup leaders?

MR. CASEY: Well, again, I understand we're talking to a broad variety of individuals. I don't have anything for you on specific contacts that have been made. Again, I think our message, though, is the same to everyone and it is one that we are disseminating broadly both with officials here in Washington as well as those in Thailand.

QUESTION: Broadly have they been in touch with the government and then with the coup leaders --

MR. CASEY: My understanding is we are talking to all actors involved, and I would assume that includes military officials as well.

Mr. Lambros.

QUESTION: Yes, on the Pope. The head of (inaudible) says, Mr. Casey, requests yesterday that the Department of Justice in Turkey that the Pope Benedict, head of the Catholic Church, must be arrested upon his arrival in Turkey during the upcoming visit in November and should be tried and punished because the Pope, with his illicit remarks about Islam violated several statutes of the Turkish law, encouraging discrimination based on religion, including Islam and Prophet Mohammed. Any comment?

MR. CASEY: I haven't seen those remarks, Mr. Lambros. Obviously, we've spoken to this issue before. What we believe is important and appropriate is for representatives of all religions to work together to help promote tolerance and to promote a culture of freedom of religion. That is what is important to us.

QUESTION: One more. U.S. House of Representatives' resolution (inaudible) -- the U.S. Congress yesterday is urging Turkey to respect the rights and the religious freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarch, head of Constantinople in Istanbul, Turkey, under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to recognize its international status and allow the re-opening of the theological school at Halki. May we have your comments since (inaudible) from the Congress now?

MR. CASEY: I'm not familiar with that particular piece of legislation. I don't believe there is a statement of Administration position on it. Again, I'd simply refer you back to what I've said previously and what you heard from John Hanford here. We do have concerns about promoting religious freedom including in Turkey. There are issues that you can look at within that Religious Freedom Report that talk about issues related to the Ecumenical Patriarch, but I don't have anything new to add on that for you.

Kirit.

QUESTION: President Bush yesterday had said that he was directing Secretary Rice to approach a new diplomatic effort, I guess to read it here, to engage moderate leaders across the region to help the Palestinians reform their security services, support the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in their efforts to come together and resolve their differences. Do you have anything as far as how she'll be taking -- undertaking that?

MR. CASEY: Well, I think in some ways she's doing it already. She's met up in New York with President Abbas, with Foreign Minister Livni. She's met with King Abdullah. She's speaking with other leaders around the region. The President, of course, met with President Abbas today, and the Secretary was there for that. You've heard from both of them on it.

I think mostly what we are trying to do here is have her look for opportunities to be able to move the process forward. You've heard from us on these issues before. Certainly among the other things, as you heard the President mention, is a focus on the security service. That means continuing with the work that had been done by General Dayton, among others, to try and help reform and improve the security services, to help bring about stability in Gaza and in other places in the territories. That's something that ultimately is in the interest of the Palestinian people and is ultimately in the interest of the security of Israel. Certainly she's going to be continuing to meet with officials from the region up in New York.

While I certainly don't have anything to announce for you, I would expect that at some point in the future after the events of the General Assembly are over that she will have an opportunity to travel to the region as well. But again, I think what the President's remarks highlight is his commitment to making progress on the roadmap and to ultimately achieving his vision of a two state solution. That really is -- been the goal of this Administration, and it's something that he really wishes to see move forward.

QUESTION: Is General Dayton still on the payroll?

MR. CASEY: My understanding is that he is, in fact, still on the payroll, Charlie.

QUESTION: Doing his work in -- with the Palestinian security --



MR. CASEY: I do not know exactly where he is today, but yes, my understanding is he's still on the payroll.

QUESTION: I don't mean that -- he's still in his job of trying to reform Palestinian security?

MR. CASEY: Yes, I believe there's a transition that's coming up in that, but I don't believe it's happened as of yet.

Arshad, welcome back.

QUESTION: Thank you. Good to be back. I've got a couple of things, if I may. The Iraqi Government has replaced the judge presiding over Saddam Hussein's genocide trial. That action has led some human rights groups to suggest it is unwarranted meddling in the judicial affairs of Iraq by the Iraqi Government and does not speak well of the separation of powers there. What is your reaction to the government's decision to replace the judge?

MR. CASEY: Well, first of all, this is an Iraqi process and it is governed by the Iraqi High Tribunal statute. I think really the best place to have the specifics of this decision explained are with Prime Minister Maliki's government and his officials. That said, our understanding is that the statute does give the Iraqi Council of Ministers the legal authority to replace judges in this case. So in that sense, our understanding is this is a decision that was taken in conformity with the relevant legal statutes.

I think, though, what is more important than the issue of who is presiding over the trial is whether the defendants in it are receiving a fair one. And we certainly support the efforts that are underway by the Iraqi High Tribunal to investigate in a thorough, transparent and appropriate manner. Those cases that are being prepared against Saddam Hussein as well as against others in the regime, to try them in accordance with the rule of law, for actions that they took while the previous regime was in power. And that is something that is important not only for the international community but for the Iraqi people to have accountability for those who committed crimes during the previous regime.

QUESTION: There were suggestions, I think, by Saddam Hussein's defense lawyers that he's not getting a fair trial and I'm -- according to our story at least the new judge said, well, if you want to leave you can, and the defense lawyers then stood up and left. Doesn't the replacement of a judge in what is, if not the, one of the most high-profile cases in postwar or post-invasion Iraq -- doesn't it undermine the credibility of the judiciary and of the process and of whether it will or -- you know, to summarily replace the judge, even if that is, you know, acceptable and provided for under a statute? Wouldn't you prefer that they just left the trial to unfold as it would?

MR. CASEY: Well, Arshad, I think our goal here again is seeing that there is a transparent, open trial process that meets international standards, that conforms with the relevant Iraqi laws. And again, I think what is important most of all is that this be a process that has that kind of credibility for the Iraqi people. Again, this is a decision that the Iraqi Government has made. And I think at this point, what I would do is just allow them to describe it. But again, our view of it is that this was done in accordance with the law and we do want to see this process move forward.

QUESTION: And just one last one on this. Do you regard it as a transparent and open process?

MR. CASEY: Well, we believe that the Tribunal has been set up in accordance with not only Iraqi law but international laws. We believe that the procedures that have gone forward while certainly not always have gone forward smoothly, have been done in a way that meets that international standards.

Let's go over here.

QUESTION: What is your reaction to President Chavez today speaking for the UN, calling President Bush the devil and referring to him as an imperialist seeking to dominate the world?

MR. CASEY: Well, I don't think you'll find it surprising that we disagree with the views that were expressed in President Chavez's remarks. Certainly I think it is disappointing that you see personal attacks issued by any head of state. The UN is an important world stage and an important forum and leaders come there representing their people and their country and I'll leave it to the Venezuelan people to determine whether President Chavez represented them and presented them in a way they would have liked to have seen.

Kirit.

QUESTION: The AU today extended the AMIS forces mandate through the end of the year. I was wondering if you had any reaction to that? And then also how this is going to change or if it will change the U.S. plans to put a UN force into Darfur?

MR. CASEY: I understand that they were going to extend the mandate. I haven't actually seen confirmation that it has. Either way, though, we have said before that we expect there to continue to be peacekeeping forces in Darfur. We think it is important that those forces transition as quickly as possible to a UN-led mission as has been called for. We also expect as well that during that transition period the international community will do everything it can to help support the AMIS force and to help expand it and make it stronger and more capable of carrying out the requirements under the Darfur Peace Agreement.

I know that there are a number of donors out there who have expressed interest in providing funding to help AMIS continue its mission during the transition period. We, of course, have contributed substantial funds to that effort as well. We have allocated or requested funds - excuse me -- for the budget for the upcoming year to help support an UN force as well as to help support the transition. So it is definitely positive to have that force continue. It is definitely important, though, that while that force continues that we do move with it and working together with it to expand it, enhance it and to have it then become the UN force that has been envisioned by the Security Council because that's ultimately the way to help achieve a lasting solution in Darfur.

I also do want to note, too -- since we didn't have an opportunity to brief yesterday - and that, of course, is one of the other things the President did in his address at the United Nations was announce the appointment of a special envoy for Sudan. That person is in the form of Mr. Andrew Natsios who I think many of you know from his time as Administrator at the U.S. Agency for International Development here. Andrew is in fact in New York today. He is actually there most immediately to honor a previous commitment to participate in a private event there. But he will be participating in the Secretary's meeting on Sudan on Friday and we certainly look forward to him being able to meet with various officials and those involved in this issue, and also can travel to the region in the not-too-distant future.

Arshad.

QUESTION: Since you didn't brief yesterday, I wanted to raise something that I would have raised, had there been a briefing.

MR. CASEY: Oh, I opened the door, didn't it?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MR. CASEY: Okay.

QUESTION: Hungary. As you're well aware, there had been what are described as the worst protests in Hungary since 1956, sparked by the Prime Minister's -- by the revelation that the Prime Minister had lied about the budget. Do you have any comment on this, either on the protest, but also on the Hungarian Prime Minister lying to his public ahead of an election about the budget?

MR. CASEY: Well, look, certainly this is a major issue in Hungary. And it's one that has a lot of ramifications for politics in that country. For that reason, Arshad, I think we are just going to leave it to the

folks in Hungary, certainly it political leadership, but also its citizens to determine what to make of this and how best to proceed. I understand in terms of the situation on the ground that the Hungarian police have established security controls in a number of different locations around Budapest. Protests, as I understand it, have caused some injuries and some damage. Certainly, as any one moves through a politically difficult period, we want to see things proceed in accordance with the laws of the country and we certainly hope that people will act in a peaceful manner. But we do understand obviously that this is a major issue for the Hungarian Government and the Hungarian people. But we do think it's one that's best left to their own judgments.

QUESTION: Is it acceptable to lie about budgetary matters?

MR. CASEY: Well, I know it's never acceptable to lie from the podium under any circumstances. Again, I'm not going to try and make a value judgment on it.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. CASEY: Oh, let's go over to here, back there. And then, Mr. Lambros, we'll see if we got time for an extra shot.

Let's go to her first, though.

QUESTION: Can you tell us anything about the U.S. will hold three-party talks soon -- Japan, South Korea, United States?

MR. CASEY: In terms of six-party talks?

QUESTION: Yes.

MR. CASEY: Well, we continue to as we have in the past, called for North Korea to return to the talks as quickly as possible. We believe it's long overdue that they do so. But I'm not aware that there's been any movement in that direction. Again, the other five parties are willing to meet at any time. We are simply waiting for North Korea to make the right decision and come to the talks.

QUESTION: Does the United States have any inducement plan to get North Korea come back to the six-party talks?

MR. CASEY: Well, I think the plan that's on the table is the September 19th agreement, which is one that does offer benefits to North Korea if, in fact, they choose to come to the table and negotiate an end to their nuclear program as they agreed to do in that date.

Let's go back over here.

QUESTION: On Japan, Mr. Shinzo Abe was elected the new leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan. Does the State Department have any comments on that?

MR. CASEY: Well, I understand that's happened. Obviously that's an internal matter for the Liberal Democratic Party to decide. We also understand that Diet will be meeting, I believe, on September 26th to select a new government. The important thing to us is regardless of who ultimately is in that new government, we look forward to continuing our warm, friendly relationship and our great alliance with Japan. Japan is a tremendous partner for the United States on a wide variety of issues. And we expect that we will have as good and warm relations with a future government as we have with the current one.

Mr. Lambros, last shot.

QUESTION: On Cyprus. Anything to say, Mr. Casey, about yesterday's one-hour meeting between -- in New York City between the Greek Cypriot Foreign Minister Yiorgos Lillikas and Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried?

MR. CASEY: Since I wasn't aware that the meeting took place, Mr. Lambros, no, I don't have anything specific for you on the meeting. Again, our ongoing efforts with respect to Cyprus are in accordance with our longstanding policy. We do want to see a resolution of this dispute. We believe that it is possible to do so. And we certainly, though, want that resolution to be something that is agreeable to all communities on the island.

QUESTION: But yesterday's meeting between the Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan produced no results, Mr. Casey, absolutely nothing. Therefore, I'm wondering how do you assess now the Annan plan since Mr. Annan is departing from the UN by the end of this year and his era is over.

MR. CASEY: Well, look, I'd refer you either to the Cypriot President or the UN Secretary General for details on their meeting. As I've stated, we have a pretty clear policy out there. We want to see a resolution of this. We want to see that done in accordance with the wishes of both communities in a manner that's acceptable to both of them. But I don't have anything really to offer you on that.

QUESTION: And the last one --

MR. CASEY: Let's go over to Barry first, and then we'll --

QUESTION: That's all right. Have you said anything about the Sudanese President's UN speech?

MR. CASEY: No, and I haven't seen it, but --

QUESTION: Well, he says that human rights groups have exaggerated the crisis in Darfur to help their fundraising and charged that demands for UN peacekeepers are meant to protect Israel. Do you have anything to say about that?

MR. CASEY: Well, I don't have anything to say specifically on his speech because, again, I haven't seen it.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR. CASEY: In terms of the situation in Darfur, I think we have been quite clear. It's a grave humanitarian crisis. We have made a formal legal finding, which is not only legal but proper and appropriate that the actions that have gone on in Darfur are genocide. The President has called it that, and we certainly don't have any change in our views.

Thanks everyone.

QUESTION: Oh, there was something else. It's --

MR. CASEY: All right, Barry, one last one. Hang on everybody.

QUESTION: You know it's been a hectic few minutes here. Iran is increasing its restrictions on American media. Officials are saying that the move is justified because the U.S. denied Iranian journalists visas to attend the UN General Assembly.

MR. CASEY: Well, okay. Well, let me just clarify what the situation is there. First of all, we received 150 applications for individuals to participate as part of the Iranian delegation to the UN General Assembly.

QUESTION: Right.

MR. CASEY: One hundred and twenty-five of those to date have been granted. What our records show is that on Friday, meaning September 15th, 15 journalists applied for visas to travel on the following Monday, on September 18th, as part of the or with the Iranian delegation. Certainly as you know, and as the Iranian Government certainly well knows, there are a number of procedures that we have to do to conform with U.S. law to be able to grant Iranian citizens visas to come to the U.S., and they generally are not something that can be done when one hands in applications on the close of business Friday and expects visas on a Monday morning. So we were in the process of evaluating those visas, of adjudicating them, and on Tuesday, yesterday the 19th, the Iranian mission withdrew a number of pending applications, including those for all those journalists. So certainly --

QUESTION: Fifteen plus?

MR. CASEY: Yes. So certainly there were no visas denied to journalists nor did we signal to the Iranians that we intended to do so. We were simply trying to comply with U.S. law and the necessary processes involved in that. Obviously, again, that is something that -- for Iranian citizens because of our concerns, because we don't have diplomatic relations, because they are the leading state sponsor of terror, do in fact take time. But it's certainly wrong to suggest that we either denied visas or had signaled to the Iranians that we had done so.

Thank you.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:20 p.m.)

(end transcript)

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\*WPD327 09/20/2006

Text: Federal Reserve Leaves Interest Rates Unchanged Again  
(Economic expansion seen slowing, inflation risk viewed as moderate) (240)

(begin text)

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System  
Federal Reserve Press Release  
September 20, 2006

The Federal Open Market Committee decided today to keep its target for the federal funds rate at 5-1/4 percent.

The moderation in economic growth appears to be continuing, partly reflecting a cooling of the housing market.

Readings on core inflation have been elevated, and the high levels of resource utilization and of the prices of energy and other commodities have the potential to sustain inflation pressures. However, inflation pressures seem likely to moderate over time, reflecting reduced impetus from energy prices, contained inflation expectations, and the cumulative effects of monetary policy actions and other factors restraining aggregate demand.

Nonetheless, the Committee judges that some inflation risks remain. The extent and timing of any additional firming that may be needed to address these risks will depend on the evolution of the outlook for both inflation and economic growth, as implied by incoming information.

Voting for the FOMC monetary policy action were: Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman; Timothy F. Geithner, Vice Chairman; Susan S. Bies; Jack Guynn; Donald L. Kohn; Randall S. Kroszner; Frederic S. Mishkin; Sandra Pianalto; Kevin M. Warsh; and Janet L. Yellen. Voting against was Jeffrey M. Lacker, who preferred an increase of 25 basis points in the federal funds rate target at this meeting.

(end text)

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\*WPD328 09/20/2006

Transcript: Press Gaggle by Tony Snow on Air Force One

(Iran, Thailand/coup, Iraq/Abbas meeting with Bush, Palestinian Authority/Hamas, Iraq) (1520)

(begin transcript)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
September 20, 2006

PRESS GAGGLE BY TONY SNOW

Aboard Air Force One  
En route Andrews Air Force Base

12:17 P.M. EDT

MR. SNOW: All right, speed gaggle. Questions?

QUESTION: Did the President watch President Ahmadinejad's speech last night?

MR. SNOW: No.

Q: He didn't. Has he been briefed on it? Does he have any reaction?

MR. SNOW: He's been briefed on it and his reaction was that we've been pretty clear on conditions for meeting with and talking with the Iranians -- which is to suspend the enrichment and reprocessing related activities and come to the table. There are a whole variety of benefits we want to make available to them, but we're not going to engage on specific points in his speech.

QUESTION: The President clearly yesterday was trying to speak over the heads of the regime to the people of Iran, and also more generally to the people of the Middle East. Is the White House doing anything else to try to get this message out?

MR. SNOW: Well, the President has spoken directly to the people of Iran on a number of occasions and will continue to do so. It's important to make a distinction between the government and the behavior of the government right now and the Iranian people, who are cosmopolitan, accomplished, have a long and proud historical and cultural tradition.

And we want to make it clear that in speaking to the government of Iran, saying you should not and must not be sponsors of global terror, that we are casting aspersions on the Iranian people. We, in fact, respect the vivacity of their culture and their desire for liberty that we hope that they are going to be able

to achieve, as we hope all the people in the region will be able to achieve a democracy in which they're able to speak freely and pursue their destinies freely.

Q: Does the White House or the President have any reaction to the assertions that Ahmadinejad made regarding the U.S. having too much power in the U.N.?

MR. SNOW: No.

Q: Given that Iran is showing no sign of backing off from its position, how much longer is the U.S. willing to give them for diplomacy to work, before they move to sanctions?

MR. SNOW: Well, first, it's a little difficult to figure out whether there's progress or not on the Iranian front. You made a categorical statement about Iran's behavior, and there have been conflicting signals. But we've made it clear that they need to suspend, and the United States is going to proceed working with allies toward remedial measures if the Iranians do not suspend. We retain the hope that they'll suspend those activities, because, again, it's a great deal for the Iranian people -- not only will they get the nuclear energy they say they want, but in addition, they're going to get economic, cultural, and political benefits that aren't available to them.

So there's a real choice now to be made on behalf of the Iranian people: Do you suspend, and get everything you want, or do you continue along the road toward developing the capacity to do an enrichment that could be used for weapons purposes, and find yourself isolated in the community of nations?

Q: There have been a number of deadlines already set in the past. Specifically, how much longer would the U.S. wait -- days, weeks, months?

MR. SNOW: We're working with our allies.

Q: Given the President's heartfelt promotion of democracy yesterday in his speech, how come we haven't heard from him about the coup in Thailand? Does he have any reaction to the efforts by the military there?

MR. SNOW: Yesterday, while this was going on, we were still trying to gather facts on the ground. We're disappointed in the coup. We hope those who mounted it will make good, and make good swiftly, on their promises to restore democracy. And by restoring democracy not only means elected governments, but protected rights of citizens, including freedom of speech and assembly. And we also think it's important -- well, again, not only the restoration of democracy, but once that's -- once you have democracy restored, we'll also be in a position to move forward on a free trade agreement with them.

Q: Did the U.S. government either officially, or unofficially, have any indications that this coup was coming? Did it catch you guys by complete surprise?

MR. SNOW: I don't -- the honest answer is, I don't know. I'll try to find out. Rather than saying something on the record, call me later and I'll get you a clear answer. I think I know the answer, but I don't want to say without being absolutely sure.

Q: Did the President have any interaction with the Prime Minister, former Prime Minister of Thailand at the U.N., or any other Thai officials?

MR. SNOW: I don't believe so, no. I think -- in fact, I believe the Prime Minister was back in the air yesterday -- wasn't he in the air fairly early? I think he was heading back to London.

Q: On Abbas, during that meeting, did the Prime Minister -- or the President, rather, of the Palestinian Authority, did he make any specific requests of the President in terms of economic aid? Did it get down to that kind of specifics?

MR. SNOW: No, but the two of them spent a lot of time talking about how to move forward toward a two-state solution. So they spent a lot of time really working -- I'll tell you what they decided -- President Bush said, let us know how we can help you move toward a two-state solution, so that you have two parties that can credibly negotiate to get this deal done. And that really was the key point of emphasis.

Q: Did he give you any indication of how he was coming along with his efforts to form some kind of unity government with Hamas?

MR. SNOW: Yes, he did. I don't want to go into details about it, but he talked about building the kind of unity that will enable the Palestinians to speak with one voice and to negotiate toward a two-state solution.

Q: Just to be clear, he didn't ask the President to resume aid?

MR. SNOW: There were no specific monetary requests, no. He did not come off with that kind of a list.

Q: Did he ask the President to recognize the unity government, if one were formed, that would include Hamas?

MR. SNOW: No, he didn't. But again, you don't have a unity government yet -- you're still in the process of doing talks. What the President said is -- again, he reaffirmed his commitment to working with President Abbas toward a negotiated two-state solution. And they talked about the framework for getting that done.

Q: Did the President express his opinion of the whole -- this proposed unity government plan, and whether Hamas was required to pay concessions?

MR. SNOW: He was not asked for any kind of approval of internal politics within the Palestinian Authority, nor would you expect that. If that falls into the root work of internal politics, then the Palestinians will have to do what they think best.

Q: Tony, is it correct to say that the President supports Abbas's effort at forming the coalition government? Or just that he supports Abbas as a man of peace in his effort?

MR. SNOW: The President supports Abbas's desire to have a Palestinian government that can move forward constructively toward a two-state solution.

Q: Are the reports true today that the White House has lost confidence in Mr. Maliki?

MR. SNOW: No, no, and no. And the President was -- I think that will show up also in the Wolf Blitzer interview later. But, no, that's absolutely false. You've had a Prime Minister who has been in office for barely 100 days, as a matter of fact, has been working with the generals on the ground. And what the President is doing -- you'll notice there was some fairly unclear citation of who was supposed to be a critic.

The people the President talks to, including Zal Khalilzad, our Ambassador, and General Casey, they've expressed confidence in Prime Minister Maliki's, not only desire, but his ongoing efforts to work toward, number one, suppressing terror, number two, creating national reconciliation in building the basis for a stronger democracy in Iraq. So, no, it is not true to say that there is a lack of confidence in the Prime Minister.

And it's also worth, again, reminding people who are trying to leap to conclusions, that the man has been in power for barely more than 100 days and, frankly, there has been significant progress and he continues to work with General Casey and with Ambassador Khalilzad so that we can reach that end state of a government that can sustain, govern, and defend itself.



END 12:26 P.M. EDT

(end transcript)

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